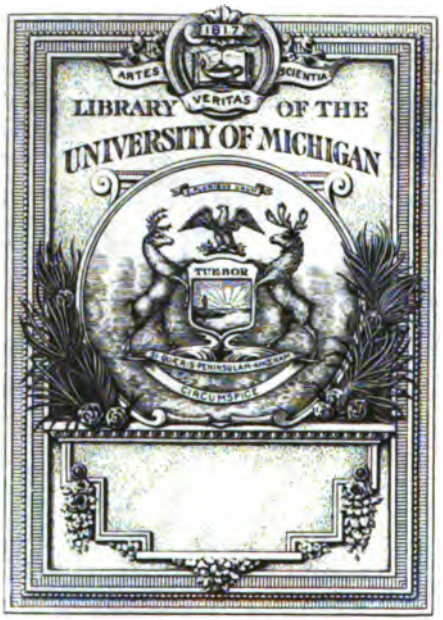
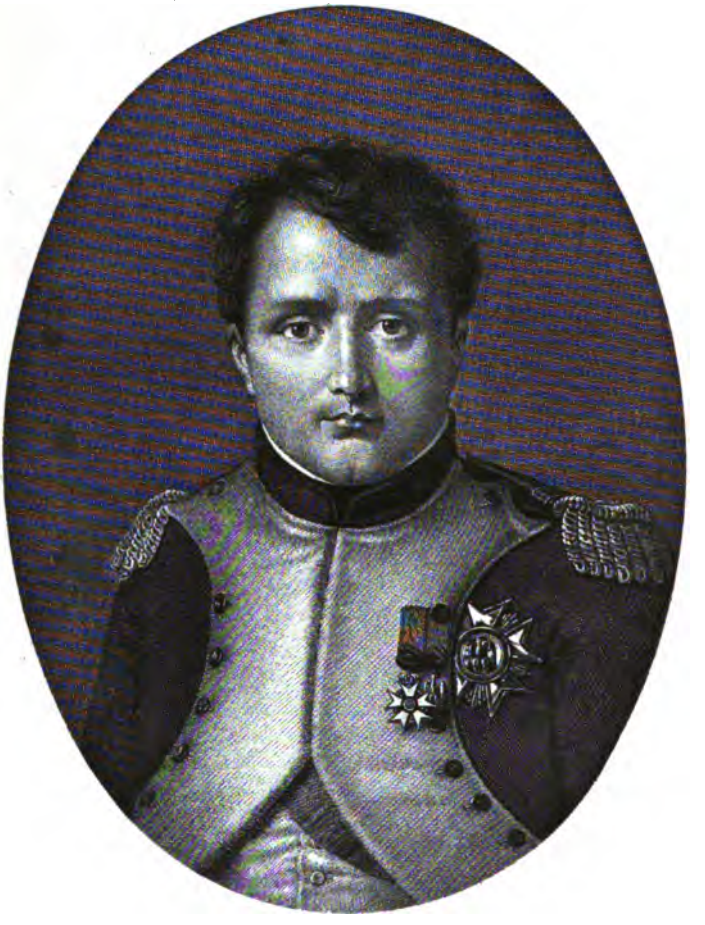


MEMOIRS OF CONSTANT



NAPOLEON I

F. JONKINS HELIOG. PARIS.

MEMOIRS

OF

CONSTANT,

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S HEAD VALET

CONTAINING DETAILS OF THE PRIVATE LIFE OF

NAPOLEON, HIS FAMILY AND HIS COURT

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED BY

PERCY PINKERTON

IN FOUR VOLUMES—VOLUME I

LONDON
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THIS English version of Constant's Memoirs of Napoleon I. is entitled to rank as one of the most entertaining contributions to the literature of that epoch. By De Bourrienne alone may Constant's vivid narrative be rivalled; indeed, the present work was avowedly intended as a supplement to that writer's reminiscences.

Constant disputes the maxim that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*, and no doubt his affection for his master was absolutely sincere. In spite of his affection, he has told his story impartially, not attempting to hide the fact that even Napoleon was fallible.

Volumes III. and IV., completing the work, are in course of publication, and will be issued shortly.

LONDON, *January*, 1896.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE life of anyone who, being neither an artist nor a tradesman, has to make a career for himself does not usually begin before he has reached the age of twenty. Until this time he vegetates, uncertain of his future, and having, as yet, no clearly-defined goal. It is only when his powers are fully developed, and when his character and his tastes lead him to follow such and such a path, that he is able to choose his career or his profession. Only then has he got to know himself, and to look clearly about him; in short, only then, at this age, does he begin to live.

Reasoning thus, my life, since I attained the age of twenty, extends over thirty years, which, as regards days and months, may be divided into two equal parts, but which is wholly different if one considers the events which took place during these two periods of my existence.

For fifteen years in personal attendance upon the Emperor Napoleon, I saw all the notable men and all the notable things of which he alone was the rallying-point and centre. I saw even more than that, for before my eyes I had, in all the circumstances of life, the gravest or the most trivial, the most secret as well as those which already form part of history—before my

eyes incessantly I had the man whose name alone fills the most glorious pages of our annals. For fifteen years I followed him in his travels, during his campaigns, when at the Court or in the bosom of his family. Whatever step he took, whatever order he gave, it was difficult for the Emperor not to make me, albeit involuntarily, his confidant; and, involuntarily, too, I got to know secrets of which I had rather been ignorant. How many things happened in those fifteen years! Life near the Emperor was like a whirlpool. It was one swift, bewildering succession of events. Half-dazzled, as it were, if one sought for a moment to fix one's attention, immediately another wave of events came to sweep one away before there was time for thought.

To such feverish excitement perfect rest now succeeds for me in my present remote seclusion. The interval is also one of fifteen years since I left the Emperor; yet, what a difference! For those who, like myself, have lived in the midst of conquests and all the marvellous achievements of the Empire, what is there to do now? If our lives were bound up with those brief years of tumult and triumph, it seems to me that our career may fairly claim to be styled noteworthy and eventful. There comes a time for all of us to rest. We are entitled to withdraw from the world and to close our eyes; for what is there to see after all that we have seen? Such sights are not witnessed twice in a life-time. After passing before a man's eyes, they suffice to fill his memory in later years, and, in his retreat, no better task is his than that of recollection.

This is what I have done. The reader can easily believe that my favourite pastime is to go back on the wings of memory to those years spent in the Emperor's service. As much as possible I have sought to become acquainted with everything written concerning my old master, his family and his Court. As, seated by the fire-side, my wife or sister-in-law read about these things to me, how many long evenings passed by as in a moment! When in these books—many of them only worthless rhapsodies—I found statements that were inaccurate, false or lying, it was a pleasure to me to rectify them, or to prove their absurdity. My wife, who, like myself, lived through these eventful times, would then give her evidence and opinions, noting down our mutual remarks for her own satisfaction.

All those who occasionally visited us in our solitude, and took pleasure in getting me to speak of all my experiences, were amazed and indignant at the lies published by false and fatuous persons about the Emperor and the Empire. Moreover, they were grateful to me for such information as I was in a position to give them, and advised me to communicate this to the public. Yet I never decided to do so, and I was far from supposing that I should ever figure as the author of a book, until M. Lavocat came to our retreat and strongly urged me to write my Memoirs, which he offered to publish.

At the time of this unlooked-for visit we were reading the "Memoirs of M. de Bourrienne," which Lavocat had just issued, and we had repeatedly noticed that these Memoirs lacked the unpleasant note of sycophancy or

disparagement common to books dealing with our great master. M. Lavocat advised me to complete the biography of the Emperor, the political side of which M. de Bourrienne, owing to his high position and profession, had merely been at pains to show. After his excellent narrative, it only remained for me, so his publisher said, to state in simple fashion certain facts which M. de Bourrienne, of necessity, had omitted to record, and of which none had better knowledge than myself.

I frankly admit that I had little objection to offer to this proposal of M. Lavocat. Such as there was he overcame by making me read the following passage from the Introduction to M. de Bourrienne's book:

"If all those persons who at any time or place were close to Napoleon would *frankly* and dispassionately state what they saw and heard, the historian of the future would be richly furnished with materials. I am desirous that whoever undertakes this difficult task may find in my notes certain information which shall serve to make his own work perfect."

After attentively perusing these lines, I said to myself: "I, too, am competent to furnish notes and explanations, pointing out errors, demolishing falsehoods and setting forth the truth as I know it. In a word, I can and *I ought* to add my evidence to the quantity that has accumulated since the Emperor's fall; for I was a *witness*, I saw everything, and I can say that *I was on the spot*." Others, too, were intimately connected with the Emperor and his Court, and it may often chance that I shall repeat things that they have already said, for what they

know, I also was in a position to know. But information which, on the other hand, I possess of a secret nature, it has been impossible for anyone but myself to gain; thus no one is able to forestall me in its publication."[1]

From the time that the First Consul left for Marengo, whither I accompanied him, until the departure from Fontainebleau, when I was obliged to quit the Emperor, I was only twice absent on leave—once for three days, and, on the second occasion, for a week. With the exception of these very short holidays (the latter being necessary for the recovery of my health), I kept as close to the Emperor as had I been his shadow.

It has been asserted that "he was no hero to his valet-de-chambre." I beg leave to differ. However closely viewed, the Emperor was always a hero, and, as a man, he gained immensely in the eyes of those who could thus scrutinise him. Afar, his power and glory alone created an impression; but when close to him, the charm of his conversation, of his simple life, and—I say it fearlessly—of his benevolent disposition, made themselves felt with surprising and delightful force.

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1 In support of my assertion, I am glad to be able to cite the opinion of M. de Bourrienne with reference to a sad event, to which I shall, in due course, allude.

"It was on the night previous to Marshal Macdonald's return to Fontainebleau that Napoleon is said to have tried to poison himself; but as I have no details concerning this, and as I am only wishful to speak of what I actually know for certain, I will abstain from offering conjectures as to so grave a fact—one which Napoleon totally repudiated when at Saint-Helena. The only person able to dispel doubts on this head is Constant, who, as I understand, never left Napoleon all that night."—"De Bourrienne," vol. x., p. 161.

The reader who is curious to know beforehand in what spirit these Memoirs of mine will be written, may possibly care to read this extract from a letter addressed last January by me to my publisher:

"M. de Bourrienne may, perhaps, be right in dealing severely with the politician. This point of regard, however, is not mine. I can only speak of my hero *en déshabillé;* and then he was always kind, patient, and rarely unjust. He was most affectionate, gladly accepting the attentions of those to whom he was attached. It is as a devoted servant that I desire to speak of the Emperor, not as a critic. At the same time, I have no wish to produce his apotheosis in four volumes. I feel towards him rather as a father feels towards his children. Recognising their faults, and strongly condemning these, he is yet glad if, for their wrong-doing, some excuse may be found."

I beg that I may be forgiven the familiarity, or even the impropriety, of this comparison, for which the spirit that dictated it must atone. I do not intend either to praise or to blame, but simply to narrate facts that have come to my knowledge, being loth to prejudice anybody.

I cannot conclude this Introduction without saying a few words about myself in reply to calumnies aimed at a man who, if kind actions, never base ones, could achieve it, ought to be without a single foe. I have been blamed for abandoning my master after his fall, and for not sharing his exile. I can prove that, if I did not accompany the Emperor, it was not because I would not,

but because I could not do so. Later on I shall explain the motives for this separation.

The truth will also appear concerning my so-called breach of confidence, of which I have been slanderously accused. The bare statement of the misunderstanding which started this fable shall suffice, I trust, to free me from the slightest suspicion of having acted indelicately. Yet, if other testimony were needed, I might quote that of persons who enjoyed the Emperor's closest intimacy and could competently judge of what passed between His Majesty and myself. In conclusion, I could call to my support these fifty years of a blameless life, and say:

"When in a position to render great services to others, I did so frequently, but never for money. I might legitimately have profited by my help given to those who thereby reaped immense fortunes, yet such substantial proofs of their gratitude I made a point of refusing. I never sought to take undue advantage of the benevolent treatment wherewith the Emperor deigned to honour me, by securing wealth or advancement for my relatives; and, after fifteen years spent in the private service of the richest and most powerful of European Sovereigns, I retired a poor man."

Having said this, I confidently await the verdict of my readers.

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MEMOIRS

OF

CONSTANT

CHAPTER I

Birth of the author—His father, his relatives—His first protectors—Emigration and abandonment—The twelve-year-old suspect—The municipal authorities: what idiots!—Colonel Michau—M. Gobert—Carrat—Madame Bonaparte and her daughter—Bouquets and sentiment—Carrat's parsimony towards others and generosity towards himself—His cowardice—Waggish tricks of Madame Bonaparte and of Hortense—The ghost—The nocturnal shower-bath—The fall—The author enters the service of M. Eugene de Beauharnais.

I SHALL say but little about myself in these Memoirs, for I cannot be blind to the fact that the public will be interested solely in any details regarding the great man in whose service Fate placed me for sixteen years, and whom, during that period, I scarcely ever quitted. I must, however, ask permission to say a few words about my childhood, and with regard to those circumstances which led

to my filling the post of *valet-de-chambre* to the Emperor.

I was born on the 2nd of December, 1778, at Perueltz, a town which became French after the union of Belgium with the Republic, and which was then comprised in the department of Jemmapes. Soon after my birth, my father took a little place at Saint-Amand, called the Petit-Château, where persons taking the waters lodged. In this venture he had been assisted by the Prince de Croï, in whose household he had filled the post of *maître d'hôtel*. Our business flourished beyond my father's expectations, for we had as lodgers a great many illustrious patients. When I was eleven years old, the Count de Lure, head of one of the leading families of Valenciennes, happened to be staying at the Petit-Château, and as this excellent man took a great liking to me, he asked my parents to let him bring me up with his own sons who were just about my age. My people had an idea of making me take orders, to please an uncle of mine who was Dean of Lessine. He was a man of great learning and rigid morals. Thinking that the Count de Lure's proposal would in no way alter his subsequent plans, my father accepted it, considering that a few years passed in so distinguished a family would give me a taste for

learning and prepare me for more serious study prior to entering the Church. So I went away with the Count de Lure, being very sorry to leave my parents, yet well pleased at the same time, as boys of my age usually are, to see a new country. The Count took me to one of his estates near Tours, where I was welcomed in most friendly fashion by the Countess and her children, and treated on a footing of perfect equality, being taught daily by their tutor.

Alas! it was not my good fortune long to profit by the Count de Lure's kindness and the lessons which I received while under his roof. A year had scarcely passed since taking up our residence at the château when news reached us of the arrest of the King at Varennes. My host and hostess were in despair, and, child though I was, I can remember feeling much grieved at the news, without knowing why; though, doubtless, one naturally shares the feelings of those with whom one lives, especially if one is treated with such kindness as the Count and Countess de Lure showed towards me. Mine, however, was the happy heedlessness of youth, and presentiments I had none. One morning I was aroused by a loud noise. I soon saw myself surrounded by a number of strangers, none of whom I knew, and

who asked me a host of questions to which I could give no reply. It was only then that I heard that the Count and Countess had decided to leave the country. I was taken before the Mayor and further cross-examined, but all to no purpose, my only answer being to shed tears in abundance at finding myself thus forsaken, and so far away from my home. I was too young then to consider the Count's conduct, but I have since thought that, in abandoning me thus he showed his delicacy, not wishing me to emigrate with him unless he had my parents' consent. Moreover, I have always been convinced that, before leaving, the Count recommended me to the care of certain personages, but that they did not dare to come forward and claim me, fearing that thereby they might be compromised, a most perilous thing at that time, as we know.

Thus, there I was, alone, at the age of twelve, without a guide or supporter, without advice or money, more than a hundred leagues from my native place, and already used to the comforts of a well-appointed home. Would you believe it? even in such a plight as this I was almost looked upon as a suspect, and the local authorities insisted on my appearance every day at the mayoralty the

better to ensure the safety of the Republic! I also remember that when the Emperor was pleased to ask me to relate some of the tribulations of my youth, he used always to ejaculate repeatedly, "What idiots!" when alluding to these worthy municipal folk. Be that as it may, the authorities of Tours, having at length come to the conclusion that a child of twelve was incapable of upsetting the Republic, gave me a passport, together with strict orders to leave the city within four-and-twenty hours. This I was most ready to do, but not without much chagrin at finding myself a penniless pedestrian upon the high-road with a long journey before me. After great privations, I at last reached Saint-Amand, which I found in the hands of the Austrians. The French had blockaded the city, but it was impossible for me to enter it. In my despair I sat down by the side of a ditch and began to cry bitterly, when I was observed by Lieutenant-Colonel Michau,[1] afterwards aide-de-camp to General Loison. M. Michau, approaching, questioned me with much interest, made me narrate my sad adventures, and seemed touched at their recital. But he did not hide from me the fact that he was

1 I subsequently was able to obtain for him from the Emperor a post on the retired list, as he had lost the use of his right arm.

powerless to restore me to my family. As he himself was just going home to Chinon on leave of absence, he proposed that I should accompany him, and I most gratefully accepted his offer. I cannot say how thoughtful and kind he and his kinsfolk were to me during the three or four months that I stayed with them. After this, M. Michau took me to Paris with him, where before long I went to live with M. Gobert, a wealthy merchant, who treated me with the utmost kindness all the while I was with him.

Only lately I met M. Gobert, when he reminded me of the way in which, when travelling together, he used to let me lie down at full length on one of the seats in his carriage and go to sleep. I am pleased to mention this circumstance, insignificant though it be, for it shows with what kindness M. Gobert was wont to treat me.

Some years afterwards, I made the acquaintance of Carrat, who was in Madame Bonaparte's service while the General was absent on his Egyptian expedition. But before narrating the circumstances of my entry into this family, it seems apt that I should tell how Carrat himself became attached to Madame Bonaparte, and recount certain anecdotes concerning him which may serve to give one an idea of the early pastimes of the inmates of La Malmaison.

Carrat was at Plombières when Madame Bonaparte came there to take the waters. Every day he used to bring her bouquets, and pay her such quaint, droll little compliments, that Josephine was much amused, as well as certain other ladies, her companions, including Mesdames de Cambis and de Crigny,[1] and also Hortense, her daughter, who used to burst out laughing at such funny behaviour. The fact is, it was the silly way he had with him which made him so intensely amusing, together with a certain originality of temperament not devoid of wit. As his waggishness pleased Madame Bonaparte, he thought he would treat her to a sentimental scene just as the good lady was about to leave the watering-place. Carrat wept and made loud lament, declaring how bitterly grieved he would be not to see Madame Bonaparte every day as he had been used to do. So, in her kind-heartedness, she did not scruple to take him back with her to Paris. She taught him how to dress hair, and gave him a permanent post as her *valet-de-chambre* and *coiffeur*—such, at any rate, were the offices that he was supposed to perform when I made his acquaintance. Towards his mistress he adopted a frankness of speech that was positively astounding; at times, indeed, he actually scolded

1 Madame de Crigny afterwards became Madame Denon.

her. When Madame Bonaparte, who was extremely generous and good-natured towards everybody, used to give her maids presents, or chat familiarly with them, Carrat would grumble and say, "Why give that away? That's just like you, madam, you laugh and joke with your servants, and, the very first day even, they are wanting in respect towards you!" But, while checking his mistress when minded to be generous to her subordinates, he was by no means backward in encouraging her to extend such generosity to himself, and if he happened to fancy something, he simply said, "You had better give this to me."

Courage and wit are not always allied. Of this Carrat furnished more than one proof. He had about him that air of ingenuous, invincible poltroonery which in a comic play never fails to make the audience laugh, and Madame Bonaparte thought it rare fun to play tricks upon him that served to exhibit his extreme pusillanimity.

At La Malmaison, one of Madame Bonaparte's favourite amusements was to take a walk along the high-road which skirts the park wall. She vastly preferred this promenade, where there was always clouds of dust, to strolling along the cool, green alleys of the park itself. One day, when going for

this walk with her daughter Hortense, Madame Bonaparte told Carrat to accompany them. He was delighted at such a mark of distinction, and with great alacrity complied, when suddenly, from one of the ditches by the roadway, there rose up a gaunt figure robed in a white sheet — in fact, a regular ghost, such as those of which I have read a description in translations of old-fashioned English novels. Needless to say, the ghost had been expressly put there by the ladies in order to frighten Carrat. The joke was certainly a most successful one. Hardly had he spied the apparition, than Carrat rushed in abject terror to Madame Bonaparte and tremblingly exclaimed, "Madam, madam, look at the ghost! It is that of the lady who lately died at Plombières!"

"Hush, Carrat, what a coward you are!"

"No, but I am sure that it is her ghost!"

Hereupon the man in the sheet, in order worthily to play his part, rushed at Carrat and waved his white garments, which so terrified the unlucky valet that he fell down in a faint, and it needed every effort to bring him to.

Another time—always while the General was away in Egypt, and I was not yet in the service of any member of his family — Madame Bonaparte

wished to give certain of her friends an exhibition of Carrat's cowardice. Accordingly, a plot was formed among the ladies at La Malmaison, Mademoiselle Hortense acting as chief conspirator. So often have I heard Madame Bonaparte describe this scene that I am able to particularise its ludicrous details. Carrat slept in a room next to a small closet. A hole was made in the partition, through which a string was passed, at the end of which was a pot full of water. This was suspended right over the victim's head. But this was not all. The screws that fastened Carrat's bedstead had been taken out, and, as he was in the habit of going to bed in the dark, he saw neither the collapsible couch nor the vase containing the water for his second baptism. All the conspirators waited for a short while until he jumped into his bed, which at once gave way, and, as the string was pulled, cool streams descended upon him from above. Bruised and dripping, the wretched man began to scream loudly, while naughty Hortense, to add to his misery, called out, "Oh, mamma! the frogs and toads in the water will fall on to his face!" This speech, uttered in the dark, only heightened Carrat's terror. He got very angry, and he exclaimed, "It is horrid, it is dis-

graceful of you, madam, to play such tricks upon your servants!" I admit that his protests were not altogether unreasonable, but they only increased the mirth of these ladies who had thus made him a butt for their pleasantry.

Anyhow, such was the position and character of Carrat when, on making his acquaintance some time after General Bonaparte's return from Egypt, he told me that M. Eugene de Beauharnais had applied to him for a confidential valet, his own servant having been detained in Cairo by serious illness. This fellow's name was Lefebvre, an old servant, devoted to his master, as anyone would be who knew Prince Eugene, for a better man than he never lived, nor one more thoughtful and kind to those in his service. When Carrat told me that M. Eugene de Beauharnais wanted a young man to take Lefebvre's place, he suggested that I should do so. Accordingly, I applied for the vacancy, and the Prince was good enough to say that I should suit him. He even told me the very first day that he was much pleased with my person and wished me to enter his service at once. For my part, I was delighted at this change in my condition, which, somehow, presented itself to my imagination in the most glowing colours. I lost no time

in getting my humble belongings together, and there I was, valet, *pro tem.*, to M. de Beauharnais, little dreaming that I should one day enter the private service of General Bonaparte, still less that I should eventually become the head valet *of an Emperor.*

CHAPTER II

Prince Eugene as a carpenter's apprentice—Bonaparte and the Marquis's sword—Napoleon's first interview with Josephine—Eugene's characteristics—His love of pleasure—Thiémet and Dugazon—Constant enters Madame Bonaparte's service—L'Abbé Sieyès on horseback—Murat's mistake—La Malmaison—Josephine's salon—M. de Talleyrand—General Bonaparte's family—M. Volney—M. Denon—The game at prisoner's-base—Napoleon a bad runner—Theatricals and Society amateurs—Napoleon merely a spectator.

It was on October 16th, 1799, that Eugene de Beauharnais reached Paris on his return from Egypt, and it was almost immediately after his arrival that I had the good fortune to enter his service. M. Eugene was then just twenty-one, and I soon got to know certain particulars as to his early years and the marriage of his mother with General Bonaparte. With the facts of his father's death—one of the victims of the Revolution—everyone is familiar. When the Marquis de Beauharnais perished on the scaffold, his widow, whose property had been confiscated, found herself reduced to a position verging upon poverty. Fearing that, though still quite a child, her son might be persecuted on account of his

rank, she apprenticed him to a carpenter in the Rue de l'Echelle. A lady of my acquaintance who lived in this street often saw him passing by with a board over his shoulder. Vast, indeed, was the difference between such a position as this and the commandership of the Guides Consulaires and the vice-royalty of Italy! From Eugene's own lips I learned the singular circumstances which led to his mother's first interview with his father-in-law.

When not more than fourteen or fifteen years old Eugene heard that General Bonaparte had become possessed of the Marquis de Beauharnais' sword, and the boy ventured to take measures for its recovery, which proved completely successful. The General received him very kindly, and Eugene informed him that he had come to ask for his father's sword. His face, mien, and frank bearing pleased Bonaparte, who at once gave him back the sword he claimed. On receiving it he covered it with kisses and tears, and this in so natural, unaffected a manner, that Bonaparte was charmed. Hearing of the General's kind reception of her son, Madame de Beauharnais thought it her duty to call and thank him. Being much taken with Josephine at this very first interview, Bonaparte returned her visit. They often met, and how in due course she

became Empress of the French is well known. From numerous proofs to that effect, I am able to assert that Bonaparte's affection for Eugene never failed, for he loved him as if he were his own son.

Eugene had qualities at once agreeable and of sterling worth. His features were not handsome, yet there was something prepossessing in his appearance. His figure was sturdy and well built, if not exactly distinguished, for he had a way of waddling when he walked. In height he was about five feet three or four. He was good-tempered, gay, full of fun, generous and quick-witted; his frank, open countenance was, as we may say, the mirror of his soul. What efficient services has he not rendered during the course of his life, and at the very moment when, to do this, he had to undergo severe deprivations!

It will soon be seen how it was that I only remained a month in Eugene's service; but in that short space of time I can remember that, while scrupulously discharging all duties towards his mother and step-father, he was vastly fond of amusing himself. One of the things which pleased him most was to give luncheon-parties to his friends. He constantly did this, and they afforded me a good deal of amusement, owing to the comic scenes of which I was a witness. Besides his most frequent guests—

the young officers attached to Bonaparte's staff—he used to invite Thiémet, the ventriloquist; Dugazon, Dazincourt and Michau, of the Théâtre Français, besides others whose names for the moment I have forgotten. As may well be imagined, such parties were extremely gay; the young officers in particular, who, like Eugene, had just returned from the Egyptian campaign, sought to make amends for all the privations they had had to bear. Just at this time, in Paris, conjurors and ventriloquists were the fashion; they were invited to private parties; and Thiémet was one of the most famous of their number.

I remember that one day, at one of Eugene's luncheons, Thiémet called several of the guests by their names, imitating the voices of their servants, as if the voice came from without, he sitting perfectly still meanwhile, and apparently only moving his lips to eat and drink, two functions which he certainly performed extremely well. Being thus summoned, each of the officers went downstairs to find nobody there, and at last Thiémet, with well-feigned concern, accompanied them, as though to help them in their search, while prolonging their discomfiture by fresh imitations of the familiar voices. Most of them laughed heartily when they found out what a

trick had been played upon them; but one officer, less tolerant than his companions, lost his temper and took the joke somewhat too seriously, when Eugene declared that he was to blame, as conspirator-in-chief.

I recollect another funny scene, the two chief actors in which were this same Thiémet and Dugazon. Several strangers were present; everyone had got his cue, and the two victims had been singled out. When all were seated at table, Dugazon, imitating a stammer, addressed Thiémet, who, as arranged, stuttered back in reply. Then each pretended to think that the other was laughing at him, and a stammerer's quarrel ensued, and as their fury increased, their power to give vent to it diminished. Thiémet, who pretended to be deaf as well, turned to his neighbour, with an ear-trumpet, asking, "Wha-wha-wha-what d-d-d-does he s-s-s-say?" "Nothing," replied the officious neighbour, anxious to prevent a quarrel. "Ye-ye-yes, h-h-he is la-la-la-la-laughing at m-m-me!" Then the dispute grew more lively; from words they were for getting to blows. Each stammerer seized a decanter to hurl at the head of his antagonist, when, as the price of their attempts at mediation, the other guests found themselves suddenly drenched with water.

Yet the two stammerers continued shouting, as if they were both deaf, until the very last drop of water had been spilt; and I recollect how Eugene, the instigator of the whole thing, roared with laughter all the while. Then they all dried themselves, and there was a general reconciliation over bumpers of wine. After playing a prank of this sort, Eugene never omitted to tell his mother, and even his stepfather sometimes, when both were amused, especially Josephine.

For about a month I had had a merry time of it in Eugene's employ, when Lefebvre, his old valet, whom he had left behind in Cairo, ill, came back cured, and wished to resume his former situation. Eugene wanted him to enter his mother's service, as I, being young and vigorous, was more suitable, and he tried to convince Lefebvre how far more beneficial to him this change would be. The latter, however, being devotedly attached to his master, went to Madame Bonaparte, and told her how grieved he was at M. Eugene's decision. She comforted him, declaring she would speak to her son, and reinstate him in his old office, taking me into her service instead. This she accordingly did; and one morning Eugene most good-naturedly informed me of my change of home. "Constant," said he, "I am

very sorry at the reason for our having to part, but you know why it is. Lefebvre used to valet me in Egypt; he is an old servant, and I cannot well avoid taking him back. However, we shall not be strangers, as you will be at my mother's, where you will find it very comfortable, and there we shall often meet. Go there to-day, and say I sent you, for I have said you are coming; in fact, she expects you."

As may be imagined, I lost no time in presenting myself to Madame Bonaparte. Knowing that she was at La Malmaison, I at once went thither, and was received by Madame Bonaparte with a kindness that filled me with gratitude; for I did not then know that she showed such kindness to everybody, that it was as inseparable from her character as grace from her person. My duties in her employ were quite insignificant; nearly all my time was my own, and, profiting by such leisure, I made frequent visits to Paris. For a young man like myself, such a life was most pleasant; at that time I had no idea that later on it would be so full of restrictions.

Before proceeding further, I should like to mention certain incidents connected with this epoch, of which my pleasant position as valet to M. de Beauharnais gave me knowledge.

M. de Bourrienne in his "Memoirs" gives a complete account of the events of the 18th Brumaire. His narrative of the incidents of this famous day are as exact as they are interesting; and all persons curious to know the hidden causes for such abrupt political changes may find these faithfully set forth in this statesman's account. Far be it from me to pretend to excite interest of this sort; but while reading M. de Bourrienne's work I was reminded of certain of my own experiences. Certain facts he has ignored or purposely omitted as unimportant, and that which he has let fall by the way, I am now glad to glean.

I was still in M. de Beauharnais' service when General Bonaparte overthrew the Directory; but my facilities for knowing all that went forward were as great as if I had been in the service of Madame Bonaparte, or of the General himself. For my master, though very young, enjoyed the entire confidence of his step-father, not to speak of that of his mother, who consulted him on every occasion.

A few days before the 18th Brumaire, M. Eugene ordered me to make preparations for a lunch that he was going to give to friends of his on that very day. The number of guests, all army

men, was much greater than usual. This bachelors' banquet was greatly enlivened by an officer who gave burlesque imitations of the Directors and certain of their colleagues. In order to caricature Director Barras, he wrapped the tablecloth round him in Greek fashion, took off his black tie, turned down his shirt collar, and then walked about with a mincing air, resting his left arm on the shoulder of his youngest comrade, while with his right he stroked his chin. Nobody could fail to see the point of the joke, which provoked incessant roars of laughter.

Then he burlesqued the Abbé Sieyès by sticking long strips of paper into his cravat, pulling a long, pale face, and riding round the room on his chair. After one or two turns he flung a somersault on to the floor, as if his horse had thrown him. The point of such pleasantry lay in the fact that for some little time the Abbé Sieyès had been taking riding lessons in the Luxembourg Gardens, much to the amusement of promenaders, who assembled in crowds to watch the stiff, awkward antics of the new cavalier.

After lunch, M. Eugene went to General Bonaparte's, whose aide-de-camp he was, his guests returning to their several regiments. I followed

them, for, from certain remarks which I had heard during lunch, I expected that something of a grave and interesting nature was about to take place. M. Eugene had arranged to meet his comrades at the Pont-Tournant. I went thither, and found a large gathering of officers in uniform and on horseback, all of them ready to accompany General Bonaparte to Saint-Cloud.

The colonels in command had all been instructed by General Bonaparte to give lunch-parties to their staff, and thus followed my young master's example. Yet the officers, and even the generals, were not all of them in the secret. General Murat himself, who, at the head of his grenadiers, burst into the Hall of the Five Hundred, thought that it was only an age-licence that General Bonaparte was going to claim in order to obtain a post as Director.

From a reliable source I heard that when General Jubé, one of Bonaparte's devoted allies, made the palace guard turn out in the court-yard of the Luxembourg, worthy M. Gohier, President of the Directory, looked out of the window and cried:

"Citizen General, what are you doing?"

"Don't you see, Citizen President, I am calling out the guard?"

"Of course I see that, Citizen General; but what is it for?"

"Citizen President, I am going to inspect the troops before executing a grand manœuvre. Forward! Quick march!" And away went the General at the head of his troops to join General Bonaparte at Saint-Cloud; he being invited to lunch with the President that very morning, who, however, waited for him in vain.

General Marmont had also given a lunch to the officers of the corps which he commanded. I think it was the artillery. At the end of the repast he addressed a few words to them, enjoining them not to separate their cause from that of the conqueror of Italy, and asking them to accompany him to Saint-Cloud.

"But how are we to follow him?" cried one of the guests. "We have no horses."

"If that is the only hindrance," said the General, "you will find some in the court-yard of this hotel. I have retained all those used in the Government service. Let us go down and take horse forthwith."

All the officers present acquiesced, with the sole exception of General Allix, who declared that he did not want to be mixed up in such a squabble.

On the 18th and 19th Brumaire I was at Saint-Cloud. I saw General Bonaparte haranguing the soldiers, and heard him read out the decree appointing him commander-in-chief of all the troops in Paris and included within the entire seventeenth military division. First of all I saw him come out of the Council of Ancients looking greatly agitated, and he subsequently left the Assembly of the Five Hundred. I saw M. Lucien led out by some of the grenadiers sent to protect him from the violence of his colleagues. Pale and furious, he leapt on to a horse and galloped straight at the troops to harangue them. Just as he turned the point of his sword to the breast of his brother the General, saying that he would be the first to kill him if he dared to infringe upon the national liberty, cries were heard on every side of "Long live Bonaparte! Down with the lawyers!" and, led by Murat, the troops charged the Hall of the Five Hundred. Everyone knows the result; nor shall I here repeat details that have been given so many times before.

On becoming First Consul the General took up his residence at the Luxembourg. At this period he also lived at La Malmaison. He and Josephine, however, were constantly travelling about, as, while staying at La Malmaison, they frequently visited

Paris, where the presence of the First Consul was often required. They also used to come up to the play—a favourite pastime of General Bonaparte. He always preferred the Théâtre Français or the Italian Opera—a remark which I merely make in passing, as I intend to touch upon his peculiar tastes and habits later on.

La Malmaison, at the time to which I refer, was a delightful resort, where everybody's face beamed with satisfaction; in fact, wherever I went I heard blessings invoked upon the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte. In the *salon* of Madame Bonaparte at La Malmaison there was yet not a trace of that rigid etiquette which afterwards had to be observed at Saint-Cloud, at the Tuileries, and all the palaces occupied by the Emperor. Society there was refined and unpretentious; equally as far removed from the vulgarity of the Republic as from the luxury of the Empire. One of the most assiduous visitors at that time was M. de Talleyrand. Occasionally he dined there, but usually came about eight or nine o'clock in the evening, and went away at one, two, or even three o'clock in the morning. At Madame Bonaparte's everyone was treated almost on a footing of equality. To all this proved most pleasant. Here Murat, Duroc and Berthier met in familiar fashion,

besides all those other persons since marked out for high preferment, even for crowns, in the annals of the Empire. General Bonaparte's family was also most attentive. But, as we know, his relatives did not like Madame Bonaparte. I had subsequent proof of this. Mademoiselle Hortense never left her mother; they were both very fond of each other. Besides men holding distinguished offices in the Army and the State, there were those also who, by personal merit as well as by birth, were noteworthy. It was, in truth, a sort of magic-lantern which showed us these people filing past in succession, and the spectacle, though it lacked the gaiety of M. Eugene's lunch-parties, was far from being unattractive. Among our most frequent guests were M. de Volney, M. Denon, M. Lemercier, the Prince de Poix, MM. de Laigle, M. Charles, M. Baudin, General Beurnonville, M. Isabey, and a great number of persons celebrated in science, letters and art; in short, most of those who used to visit Madame de Montesson.

Madame Bonaparte and Mademoiselle Hortense often went out for a ride in the country. On these excursions their most faithful attendants were generally Prince de Poix and the Messieurs de Laigle. One day, as they were entering the court-

yard at La Malmaison, Mademoiselle Hortense's horse was startled, and began to rear. She had an excellent seat, and, being very active, wanted to dismount, when her habit caught in the stirrup and she fell down, the horse dragging her along for a short distance. Happily, the gentlemen accompanying her saw the accident and hastened to her rescue. They found that she had not hurt herself in the least, and was the first to laugh heartily at this mishap.

During the first part of my stay at La Malmaison the First Consul always slept with his wife, like any other respectable citizen, nor was there ever a word said about any intrigue of his at the château. There was always a large house-party, and, as most of the guests were young people, they used to play games much as if they were all at school. Prisoner's-base was one of their favourite games. After dinner, Bonaparte, Lauriston, Didelot, De Lucay, De Bourrienne, Eugene, Rapp, Isabey, Madame Bonaparte and Mademoiselle Hortense, divided themselves into two camps, where the interchange of prisoners must have reminded the First Consul of the great game which, personally, he far preferred.

The most agile competitors were M. Eugene, M. Isabey and Mademoiselle Hortense. As for General Bonaparte, though he often fell down, he used always

to get up again laughing loudly. The General and his family seemed to be thoroughly happy, especially when they were at La Malmaison. Charming though it was, this place in no way resembled that which afterwards it became. The property consisted of the château, which, on his return from Egypt, Bonaparte found in very bad repair; a park of great beauty, and a farm yielding an income of certainly not more than twelve thousand francs per annum. Josephine herself superintended all the improvements, nor could anyone have shown greater taste than she.

From the very first we always used to have acting at La Malmaison. The First Consul was very fond of this sort of amusement; but he never played any other part than that of spectator. All the servants were present at these performances, and I cannot forbear saying how highly amused we all were (more so, possibly, than anyone else) at seeing our masters and mistresses dressed up in this way. The Malmaison Troupe (if I may thus style the actors of such high social position) comprised MM. Eugene, Jerome, Lauriston, de Bourrienne, Isabey, de Leroy and Didelot, Mademoiselle Hortense, Madame Caroline Murat and Mademoiselles Auguié, one of whom married Marshal Ney, and the other M. de Broc. They were all young and attractive; few Paris

theatres, indeed, could have boasted four such pretty actresses. Moreover, they were most graceful on the stage, and played their parts with positive talent. It was just as if they were in their own drawing-room, their manner being exquisitely natural and refined. The repertory was not very extensive at first; as a rule, though, it was well-chosen. The first performance at which I was present included the *Barbier de Seville* (M. Isabey playing Figaro and Mademoiselle Hortense, Rosine) and the *Dépit Amoureux*. Another time I saw them give the *Gageure Imprévue* and *Fausses Consultations*. Mademoiselle Hortense and M. Eugene acted admirably in this last piece; and I well remember how, in her elderly make-up as old Madame Leblanc, Mademoiselle Hortense looked prettier than ever. M. Eugene played Lenoir, while M. Lauriston was the charlatan. As I have already remarked, the First Consul confined himself to playing the part of a spectator, but he seemed to take a keen interest in the whole thing, laughing and applauding with all his might, often criticising the performance as well. Madame Bonaparte was equally amused, and if she was not proud of the success of her children—the "leading ladies" of the company—she was glad it all afforded such a pleasant diversion for her husband, whom she was

ever anxious to amuse; in fact, to contribute to the welfare of the great man who had linked his lot to hers was her one thought and care.

When a performance was once fixed for a certain date, it was never postponed, although often there was a change of bill, not, as in Paris theatres, because an actress has a headache or is indisposed, but for more serious reasons. It often happened that M. d'Etieulette received orders to join his regiment, or that the Count Almaviva had been entrusted with an important mission, but Figaro and Rosine always remained faithfully at their posts; and so eager was everyone to please the First Consul that the understudies showed unfailing good-will in the absence of the principals, and thus the performances never suffered on account of the absence of one of the actors.[1]

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1 Michau, of the Comédie Française, was stage-manager. If one of the actors happened to be wanting in warmth of delivery, he used to call out, "Chaud! chaud! chaud!"

CHAPTER III

M. Charvet—Departure for Egypt—The Pomone*—Madame Bonaparte at Plombières—The* Pomone *captured by the English—Return to Paris—Purchase of La Malmaison—First plots against the First Consul's life—The Stone-cutters—The poisoned snuff—Projected abduction—Installation at the Tuileries—Steeds and sabre of Campo Formio—The heroes of Egypt and Italy—Lannes—Murat—Eugene—Arrangement of the Tuileries apartments—The First Consul's private servants—M. de Bourrienne—A game of billiards with Madame Bonaparte—Watch-dogs—Napoleon beloved by his household—He keeps the accounts—Taking up his chains again.*

I HAD only been a very short time in Madame Bonaparte's service when I made the aquaintance of M. Charvet, the hall porter at La Malmaison. My intimacy with this excellent man grew ever greater, until at last he gave me one of his daughters as a wife. I was extremely curious to get from him all details concerning Madame Bonaparte and the First Consul previous to my entering their service, and during our frequent interviews he most obligingly endeavoured to satisfy my curiosity. I am indebted to him for the following particulars respecting Madame and her daughter.

When General Bonaparte left for Egypt, Madame Bonaparte accompanied him as far as Toulon. She was most anxious indeed to go to Egypt with him, and when the General objected, she reminded him that, being a creole, the hot climate would be favourable to her rather than harmful, and by a strange coincidence it was in the *Pomone* that she wished to make the crossing; that is, in the same vessel which had brought her, when a girl, from Martinique to France. Acceding, at length, to his wife's request, the General promised to send the *Pomone* for her, telling her to go meanwhile and take the waters at Plombières. This was accordingly arranged, and Madame Bonaparte was delighted to go to Plombières as she had long wanted to take the waters, knowing how efficacious they were in cases of sterility.

One day, soon after her arrival, she was sitting in her *salon*, hemming handkerchiefs and chatting with several ladies, when Madame de Cambis, who was on the balcony, called her to come and look at a pretty little dog which was going by in the street. Everyone hurried out after Madame Bonaparte, when, suddenly, the balcony gave way with a fearful crash. As luck would have it, no one was killed; but Madame de Cambis had her thigh fractured, while Madame Bonaparte was horribly bruised, though, as a matter of fact,

no bones were broken. M. Charvet, who was upstairs, rushed out on hearing the noise, and at once had a sheep killed, in the skin of which they wrapped Madame Bonaparte. It was a long while before she got well. Her hands and arms, in particular, were so contused that for some time she could not use them, but had to have her food cut up and administered to her in mouthfuls like a child.

As we have just seen, it was Josephine's intention to rejoin her husband in Egypt, which led one to suppose that her stay at Plombières would not be a lengthy one. This accident, however, convinced her that she might have to remain there for an indefinite period, and while recovering she was anxious to have her daughter Hortense with her, who at that time was just fifteen and a pupil at Madame Campan's boarding-school. She sent Euphemie, her favourite mulatto servant to fetch her. This woman was foster-sister to Madame Bonaparte, and, though I know not upon what grounds, actually passed as her natural sister. Euphemie left in one of Madame's carriages, accompanied by M. Charvet.

On seeing them arrive, Mademoiselle Hortense was delighted, both at the idea of the journey and of being with her mother, to whom she was deeply attached. I won't say that she was a gourmand exactly,

but she was extremely fond of sweets, and M. Charvet told me that in every town through which they passed the carriage was replenished with sweetmeats and other delicacies, as Mademoiselle Hortense eat so many. One day, as Euphemie and M. Charvet were fast asleep, they were suddenly awakened by what they thought was a fearful explosion, which frightened them the more as they were just then passing through a dark forest. Hortense burst out laughing to see them so scared, and, being drenched in foam, they discovered the cause of this report. The cork had flown out of a bottle of champagne which was in one of the pockets of the carriage; the heat, the jolting, and, more likely, the young lady's love of mischief helped to provoke such a catastrophe. When Mademoiselle Hortense reached Plombières her mother had almost recovered, so that she was able to enjoy all the amusements befitting her age.

There is certainly some truth in the saying that "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," for if Madame Bonaparte had not met with this accident she would probably have been taken prisoner by the English. The *Pomone*, as it happened, was captured by these enemies of France. Moreover, as in all his letters General Bonaparte sought to dissuade his wife from rejoining him, she went back to Paris.

Upon her arrival, Josephine sought to gratify a wish that General Bonaparte had expressed to her before his departure. He told her that on his return he would like to have a country-seat, and he had even asked his brother to see about this for him. M. Joseph, however, did nothing of the sort. On the other hand, Madame Bonaparte, who was always trying to please her husband, commissioned several persons to search in the suburbs of Paris for a house that would suit him. After long hesitating between Ris and La Malmaison, she at length decided upon the latter, which she purchased of M. Lecoulteux-Dumoley for, I think, four hundred thousand francs.

All these facts M. Charvet was good enough to tell me soon after my entering Madame Bonaparte's service. Everybody in the house liked talking about her, assuredly not from any wish to promote scandal, for no mistress was more universally and more deservedly beloved. In private life, General Bonaparte was also a most excellent man.

After his return from the Egyptian campaign, several attempts were made upon the First Consul's life. The police had often warned him to be upon his guard, and never to venture to walk in the environs of La Malmaison alone. The First Consul was little inclined to be suspicious, especially before

that time. But the discovery of plots which had their origin in his most intimate *entourage* forced him to be careful and prudent. These so-called plots were afterwards said to have been invented by the police, in order to prove how necessary they were to the First Consul, or even by the First Consul himself, in order to augment the vigilance of his guardians; and as proof of the falsity of such attempts their absurdity has been quoted. I do not pretend to fathom such mysteries; yet it seems to me that in matters of this kind absurdity counts for nothing, or, at any rate, because a thing is absurd it is not necessarily false. The conspirators of this epoch certainly went to most extravagant lengths. What, indeed, could be more absurd or more real than the atrocious, foolish affair of the infernal machine? Be that as it may, I will narrate what happened before my very eyes during the first months of my stay at La Malmaison. None of the inmates ever seemed to have the slightest doubt as to the truth of the facts. Sundry alterations and repairs had to be made in the chimney-piece of the First Consul's apartments at La Malmaison. The person superintending this work sent certain stone-cutters, some of whom were in league with the conspirators. Those attached to the First Consul were

ever on the alert, exercising the utmost vigilance. Some of these artisans, it was thought, only pretended to work, and their general appearance contrasted strangely with their calling. Such suspicions were but too well-founded. For, just as the First Consul was about to take up his residence in the newly-prepared apartments, upon a desk at which he sat a snuff-box was found, precisely similar to one which he was in the habit of using. At first they supposed that it actually belonged to him, and that it had been left there by his *valet-de-chambre*. But the suspicions aroused by the strange appearance of some of the workmen took deeper root. The snuff was taken out and analysed. It was poisoned. The perpetrators of this dastardly outrage were at that time in league, so it is said, with other conspirators, who intended to resort to other means in order to get rid of the First Consul. They thought of attacking the Malmaison guards, and of forcibly abducting the head of the Government. For this purpose they had uniforms made exactly like those of the Guides Consulaires, who, night and day, were in attendance on the First Consul. In this disguise, and with the help of their confederates, the sham stone-cutters, they might easily have mixed with the guards who were lodged and

boarded at the castle. They could even have got at the First Consul and carried him off. This first scheme, however, was abandoned as too risky, and the conspirators flattered themselves that they would gain their ends in a surer, less perilous way, viz., by taking advantage of the General's frequent journeys to Paris. In such disguise they could join the escort, unnoticed, and murder him on the highway. Their meeting-place was to be the Nanterre quarries. But their plot was again discovered, and, as in the Malmaison park there was a rather deep quarry, it was feared that they might hide here and do the General some injury when he walked out by himself. So the entrance to this place was closed with an iron gate.

On the 19th of February, at one o'clock, the First Consul went in state to the Tuileries—styled, at that time, Government House—in order to take up his residence with his entire household. He had his two colleagues with him, one of whom, the Third Consul, was to reside in the same building, taking up his quarters in the Pavillon de Flore. The Consul's carriage was drawn by six white horses, a present from the German Emperor to the conqueror of Italy, after the signature of the Treaty of Campo Formio. The sabre worn on this occa-

sion by the First Consul, a magnificent one, was also a gift from His Imperial Majesty. It is worthy of note that during this solemn ceremony the gaze and plaudits of the crowd (even of the more distinguished spectators who filled every window in the Rue Thionville and the Quai Voltaire) were solely directed at the First Consul and the youthful members of his brilliant staff, bronzed as these were by the fierce suns of Egypt and Italy. In the foremost rank were the Generals Lannes and Murat, the former being easily recognised by his dashing military air; the latter, in addition thereto, having a look of great elegance and distinction in his dress and accoutrements. His new title of brother-in-law to the First Consul helped greatly to draw upon him universal scrutiny. All my attention, however, was centred upon the chief personage in the procession. Like all those about me, I could only gaze at him in rapt admiration, as well as at his step-son, the son of my excellent mistress, at him who was my former master, my brave, kind, modest Prince Eugene—at that time not yet Prince.

Upon his arrival at the Tuileries, the First Consul at once took possession of the apartments that he occupied ever since—these being part of the royal suite. They comprised a bedroom, bath-

room, closet and audience-chamber, another room for the aides-de-camp, which was also used as a dining-room, and a large ante-chamber. Madame Bonaparte had a separate suite of rooms on the ground floor—the same that she occupied as Empress. Above the First Consul's apartments were those of M. de Bourrienne, his secretary, both being connected by a private staircase.

Albeit at this time there were courtiers, there was as yet no Court. The etiquette observed was of the simplest. The First Consul, as I have already remarked, used to sleep in his wife's bed. They lived either at the Tuileries or La Malmaison, and as yet there was no sign of any grand marshal, chamberlains, prefects of the palace, maids-of-honour, ladies-in-waiting, or pages. The Consul's household merely comprised M. Pfister, major-domo; M. Venard, head cook; MM. Gaillot, Dauger and Colin. M. Ripeau was librarian, and M. Vigogne the elder, stud-groom. The personal attendants were M. Hambart, head valet; Hébert, under-valet; and Roustan, the First Consul's Mameluke. There were, besides, fourteen or fifteen people who filled minor offices. M. de Bourrienne had the control of all these, and managed the household expenses. Though very hasty, he won the esteem and affection of all;

he was kind-hearted, obliging and, above all, most just. Moreover, when his day of disgrace came, the whole household was grieved, and, for my part, I always remember him with affectionate respect, hoping that if he was so unlucky as to find enemies among the great, he nevertheless met with certain grateful hearts among his inferiors, who were deeply sorry for him.

Some days after this formal installation there was a reception of the Diplomatic Corps at the château, and the details here given will show how simple was the etiquette that then prevailed at "Court."

At eight o'clock in the evening, the apartments of Madame Bonaparte, situated, as I have already said, on the ground-floor, were thronged with people. There was a brilliant display of diamonds, feathers and gorgeous gowns. So great was the crush that Madame Bonaparte's bed-chamber had to be thrown open as well, the two other rooms being so crowded that circulation became impossible.

When, after much confusion and difficulty, everybody had got places, either good or bad, Madame Bonaparte was announced, who appeared on the arm of M. de Talleyrand. She wore a white muslin gown, with short sleeves, and a pearl necklace.

The tresses of her hair were fastened in charmingly negligent style by a tortoise-shell comb. She must have been agreeably flattered by the loud murmurs of approval which greeted her entry. Never, I think, did she carry herself with greater dignity or grace.

Still holding Madame Bonaparte by the hand, M. de Talleyrand then had the honour of presenting to her the various members of the Diplomatic Corps, mentioning them, not by their names, but by those of the several Courts that they represented. Then he walked with her through both rooms. When half-way through the second *salon*, without being announced, the First Consul suddenly entered, in an extremely simple uniform, his waist begirt by a silk tricolour scarf, with fringe to match. He wore tight-fitting white kerseymere breeches and top-boots, and carried his hat in his hand. A costume so unaffected as this formed a marked contrast to all the elaborate uniforms, covered with gold and ablaze with jewelled orders, worn by the ambassadors and foreign dignitaries. It was a contrast, at least, as imposing as Madame Bonaparte's simple attire was to that of her lady guests.

Before stating how I left Madame Bonaparte's service for that of her husband, and La Malmaison for Italy, I deem it expedient to glance backwards

and recall one or two incidents that belong to my period of service with Madame Bonaparte. She liked staying up late at night; and, after almost everyone had gone, used to be fond of a game of billiards or tric-trac. It once happened that, having sent all her attendants away and not feeling sleepy, she asked me if I could play billiards. I said "Yes," when, with charming good-nature, she asked me to have a game, and I had the honour of playing several times with her. Though I was a fairly good player, I usually managed to let her win, much to her glee. If this was flattery, then of that I confess myself guilty, but I think I should have done the same thing with any other woman, whatever her rank and position with regard to myself, if she had but been half as pleasant and engaging as Madame Bonaparte.

As a further means of protecting the First Consul from attack, the porter at La Malmaison caused the castle and grounds to be guarded by several huge watch-dogs, some of them being very fine specimens of the Newfoundland breed. They were still at work upon the alterations at La Malmaison; numbers of workmen stayed there all night, and they were specially warned never to walk about the grounds alone. One night the workmen were

playing with some of these watch-dogs inside the house, and so friendly did the animals seem, that one of the men was emboldened to venture out of doors. Thinking that, to avoid all danger, he could not do better than trust to the protection of one of these fearful brutes, he took one with him, and they crossed the threshold in very friendly fashion; but hardly had they got outside than the dog flew at the unfortunate man's throat and pinned him to the ground. The poor fellow's cries roused several of the servants, who hastened to his aid. Nor did they come a moment too soon, for the dog had seized its victim and cruelly bitten his throat. On hearing of the accident, Madame Bonaparte saw to it that the man had every attention until he was completely cured, and she also gave him a large sum of money, advising him to be more careful in future.

Whatever time that the First Consul could spare from public affairs he used to spend at La Malmaison; the eve of every *décadi*[1] was a time of expectancy and rejoicing for all the inmates of the château. Madame Bonaparte sent servants on horseback and on foot to meet her husband; and, with her daughter and waiting-women, she often went herself. When not actually

1 A period of ten days which counted as a Republican week.

in attendance, I generally used to go alone in the same direction myself, for every one of us was equally attached to our master and had a like care for his safety. Such was the vindictiveness and the audacity of his enemies, that the comparatively short route between Paris and La Malmaison was literally beset with traps and ambuscades. It was known that several attempts to kidnap him had already been made, and might be repeated. The most dangerous part of the road was thought to be near the Nanterre quarries, of which I have already made mention. On the days when the First Consul was expected, these quarries were always carefully inspected by our people, and those cavities nearest the main road were at last blocked up. The First Consul was sensible of our devotion, and expressed his gratitude, but for his own part he always seemed calm and fearless. Sometimes, even, he used to laugh at us, and with mock gravity proceed to tell Madame of the narrow escape he had had on the road, how certain ill-favoured fellows had been dodging about his coach, one of them even daring to aim at his head, &c., &c. Then, when he saw how terrified she was, he would burst out laughing, pat her cheek and kiss it, saying, "Dear old thing, don't be frightened, *they daren't!*"

On these "holidays," as he called them, he neither

busied himself with his own private affairs nor with those of the State. But he could never remain idle; in the castle or the park he was for ever demolishing, restoring, enlarging, planting or cutting down, while checking the household accounts, estimating his revenues and instituting measures of economy. With occupation such as this, time soon passed, and the moment soon came when, as he phrased it, it behoved him "to resume his yoke."

CHAPTER IV

Napoleon takes the Author into his service—He is left behind—His dismay—Madame Bonaparte comforts him—At last Constant departs—Enthusiasm of the troops—The Author rejoins Napoleon—Hospice of Saint-Bernard—Passage of Mont Albaredo—Fort Bard captured—Entry into Milan—Joy and confidence of the Milanese—Constant's fellow-servants—Battle of Montebello—Arrival of Desaix—His fury at the English—Battle of Marengo—Death of Desaix—Napoleon's grief—Desaix's tomb on Mont Saint-Bernard.

TOWARDS the end of March, 1800, five or six months after entering the service of Madame Bonaparte, the First Consul fixed his eyes upon me during dinner, and having looked at me for a long time and measured me from head to foot, he said, "Young man, would you like to go to the front with me?" Greatly excited, I replied that I should like nothing better. "Very well, then, you shall come," said he, and, rising from table, he gave orders to M. Pfister to put me on the list of those servants who were to form part of his suite. I was not long in getting my things packed, enchanted with the idea of being private servant to so great a man. I

already fancied myself on the other side of the Alps! But, alas! the First Consul went without me! By a lapse of memory, possibly intentional, M. Pfister had forgotten to put my name on the list. I was in despair, and went weeping to my mistress to tell her of my misfortune, who kindly sought to comfort me, saying, "Never mind, Constant, it's not so bad as all that, my good lad; you shall stop with me and amuse yourself by going out hunting in the park. Perhaps the First Consul may send for you, after all." Madame Bonaparte did not really think he would, for, just as I did, she believed that the First Consul had changed his mind and countermanded the order to take me with him. But she was too considerate to tell me so. However, I soon found that such was not the case. When passing through Dijon on his way to Mont Saint-Bernard, the First Consul asked for me, and was somewhat annoyed to find that they had forgotten to include me among the members of his suite. He instructed M. de Bourrienne to write at once to Madame Bonaparte and request her to let me rejoin him without delay. One morning, when I felt more down-hearted than usual about this disappointment, Madame Bonaparte sent for me, and, holding M. de Bourrienne's letter in her hand, said to me, "Well, Constant, as you

have decided to leave us and go to the front, you will be glad to hear that you are to start at once. Call at M. Maret's and find out if he is not sending a courier off shortly; in that case you could travel together." At this good news my delight was inexpressible, nor did I endeavour to conceal it.

"So you're glad to leave us, I see," said Madame Bonaparte, with a kind smile.

"No, madam," I replied, "for it's not leaving you to go and join the First Consul."

"I hope not," she said. "Well, Constant, get you gone and look after him well."

Had there been need for it, this hint on the part of my noble mistress would have redoubled the zeal and vigilance which I determined to bring to my new duties.

Without losing a moment, I hurried off to M. Maret, the Secretary of State, who knew me and was most kindly disposed towards me. "Get ready at once," said he, "for the courier leaves either this evening or to-morrow morning." I returned in hot haste to La Malmaison, to tell Madame Bonaparte of my immediate departure. She at once had a good post-chaise got ready for me, and Thibaut, the courier whom I was to accompany, had orders to provide me with horses along the route.

M. Maret gave me 800 francs for my travelling expenses. I was amazed at so large a sum, for I certainly never expected half as much; it was the first time I had ever been so rich. At four a.m. Thibaut sent word to say that everything was ready. I went to his place, where the post-chaise was waiting, and off we started.

I travelled very comfortably, sometimes in the courier's vehicle and sometimes in the post-chaise, when Thibaut and I changed places. I expected to catch up with the First Consul at Martigny, but he had marched forward so rapidly that I did not reach him until at the Convent of Mont Saint-Bernard. We kept constantly passing troops on the march, with officers and soldiers hastening to rejoin their several regiments. Their enthusiasm was indescribable. Those who had seen service in Italy were delighted at the prospect of returning to so beautiful a country, while those who had not had such experience were eager to see the fields of battle immortalised by French valour and by the heroic genius who marched at their head. All went forward as to a festival, singing and shouting as they scaled the Valais mountains. It was eight o'clock in the morning when I reached head-quarters. Pfister announced my arrival, and I found the General

in the grand hall of the hospice. He and his staff were standing up, having their breakfast. As soon as he spied me he said, "So there you are, you rogue; why didn't you come along with me?" I excused myself, saying that I had understood that the order was countermanded, which accounted for my being left behind. "Well, don't lose any time, my friend," he added; "make haste and eat something, as we're off." From this time forward I became attached to the private service of the First Consul as an ordinary valet—that is to say, taking my turn to perform those duties. It was very light work, as M. Hambart, the head valet, used to wait upon his master and dress him from head to foot.

Directly after breakfast we began to descend the mountain. Several of us slid down over the snow, as we used to do for fun in the Jardin Beaujon at home. I followed their example. We called it sledging. The General also went down an almost perpendicular glacier in this fashion. Several young soldiers, who had lost their way in the snow, were found half-dead with the cold by the monks' dogs, and they were brought to the hospice, where remedies were applied which soon restored them. The First Consul expressed his gratitude to the good Fathers for so prompt and generous an act of

charity. Moreover, before leaving the hospice, where tables spread with viands were got ready for each detachment of soldiers as it reached the summit, he and his comrades gave substantial pecuniary recompense to the monks, and a promise of further emolument in support of their convent.

The same day we scaled Mont Albaredo, but as the route was impassable for cavalry and artillery, these had to go through the town and past the batteries of the fort. The First Consul had given orders for them to pass in the night at full gallop, and caused the waggon-wheels and horses' hoofs to be swathed in straw. These precautions, however, did not wholly serve to prevent the Austrians from hearing our troops go by, and the guns of the fort kept firing incessantly. But, as luck would have it, our soldiers were sheltered by the houses, and more than half the army got past the town without serious hurt.

As for the troops guarding the First Consul, commanded by General Gardanne—I being of their number—they outflanked the fort of Bard.

On May 23rd we forded a torrent between the town and the fort, the First Consul being at our head. Followed by General Berthier and other officers, he at once climbed up Mont Albaredo to

a point dominating the fort and town of Bard. With his field-glass rivetted upon the enemy's batteries, he stood there, unprotected, save by a few shrubs, from their fire, and found fault with the dispositions of the officer in command, ordering an instant change of tactics, which at once had the effect, as he predicted, of making the place surrender. Now that he was no longer annoyed by this fort, which, as he said, had prevented him from sleeping during the two nights spent at the Saint-Moritz Convent, he lay down at the foot of a pine-tree and had a good nap while the army proceeded to effect a passage. Refreshed by such brief rest, the First Consul came down the mountain and continued his march. That night we lay at Yvrée. Good old General Lannes, who was in command of the van-guard, acted as a sort of quarter-master, forcibly seizing upon any place which happened to block the way. He had only just got possession of Yvrée as we entered it.

Such was the miraculous passage of Mont Saint-Bernard. Horses, cannon, waggons, huge quantities of ammunition, everything was dragged or carried pell-mell over glaciers that seemed inaccessible, or along paths that even one man could hardly pass. The Austrian cannon was as powerless as the ice

and snow to stop the French army, so deeply influenced were the troops by the genius and dauntless perseverance of their leader, who inspired every one of his men with such courage and force as shall some day seem well-nigh fabulous.

On June 2nd, the day after the passage of Tessin and the date of our entry into Milan, the First Consul received news of the capture of the fort of Bard. Thus his dispositions soon proved effectual, and the Saint-Bernard route was in this way secured.

The First Consul entered Milan without encountering much resistance. All the people flocked round him as he passed, and he was greeted by loud cheers. Popular confidence was increased tenfold when it was known that he had promised the assembled clergy to maintain the Catholic religion in its integrity, and had made them take the oath of fealty to the Cisalpine Republic. The First Consul stopped for some days in this capital, and I had time to make closer acquaintance with my colleagues, MM. Hambart, Roustan and Hébert. Every twenty-four hours, at mid-day precisely, each of us relieved the other. It was always my custom to note, as closely as might be, the character and disposition of any new associates, so that I might

learn how to treat them, and discover beforehand that which was to be feared or valued from their company.

Hambart's devotion to the First Consul knew no bounds, but, unfortunately, he had a glum, sulky temper, which often made him extremely disagreeable. The favour which Roustan enjoyed certainly did not tend to diminish this grumpiness. One of his fads was to imagine himself watched, and he used to lock himself into his room during his free time, and sulk there all alone. When in a good humour, the First Consul used to chaff him about such unsociable conduct, and laughingly address him as *Mademoiselle* Hambart. "Well, mademoiselle, what are you doing in your room, all by yourself? I am sure you've been reading rubbishy novels—some old-fashioned stuff about princesses that are carried off and *jealously guarded* by some barbarous giant." To which poor Hambart morosely answered, "Doubtless, sir, you know what I am about better than I do myself," intending by this speech to hint at the way in which he was being spied upon. In spite of the man's unfortunate temper, his master showed him great kindness. When, during the journey to Boulogne camp, Hambart refused to accompany the Emperor, His Majesty allowed him

to take the post of *concierge* at the Meudon palace. While there he did all sorts of absurd things. He came to a sad end. During the Hundred Days, after an audience with the Emperor, he had one of his attacks, and stabbed himself so violently with a kitchen-knife that the blade projected two inches out of his back. As at that time it was thought that I had cause to fear the Emperor's displeasure, the report spread that it was I who had committed suicide, and some of the journals published news of this tragic death as if it had been my own.

Hébert, the under-valet, was a pleasant-spoken young fellow, but excessively timid. Like all the other servants, he was devotedly attached to his master. One day, in Egypt, the First Consul, who never could shave himself,[1] sent for Hébert, in Hambart's absence, to perform that service. As, owing to excessive nervousness, Hébert had sometimes happened to cut his master's chin when shaving him, the latter, grasping a pair of scissors, said to the trembling valet, as he approached razor in hand, "Now then, you rogue, just you be careful, for if you cut me I'll stick these scissors into your belly." This threat, made in a half-serious tone, but

1 It was I who first taught him to do so, as will subsequently appear.

which was really only meant as a joke, so terrified Hébert, that he found it impossible to finish his task. He began to tremble convulsively, and the razor dropped from his hand. It was in vain that the General held out his soapy chin and laughingly cried, "Now then, coward, go on, do!" Hébert never got any further, and ever since that moment had to discontinue attempting to shave his master. The Emperor disliked such excessive timidity on the part of his servants, yet that did not prevent him from giving Hébert the coveted post of porter at the Château de Rambouillet, when this place was set in order and newly furnished.

Roustan, so well known as the Emperor's Mameluke, belonged to a good Georgian family. Having been carried off to Cairo at the age of six or seven, he became slave to the Mamelukes until he attained the age which would allow of his being enrolled among their number. When presenting a splendid Arab horse to General Bonaparte, the Sheik of Cairo also gave him Roustan, and Ibrahim, another Mameluke, who in due course joined Madame Bonaparte's suite under the name of Ali. As is well known, whenever the Emperor appeared in public, Roustan was his indispensable attendant. He took part in all journeys, all processions, and (to his

honour be it said) in all battles. In his sumptuous Oriental costume he was the most brilliant figure of all the brilliant staff that followed the Emperor. His appearance created a prodigious effect, especially upon common people and in the provinces. He was thought to hold a position of great trust, and this was, as the credulous averred, owing to Roustan having saved his master's life by flinging himself between Napoleon and the sabre-stroke of an enemy. This, as I believe, is erroneous. The special favour shown to him was only due to the great kindness with which the Emperor invariably treated his servants, nor did it extend beyond the ordinary relations of master and servant. M. Roustan married a young and pretty Frenchwoman named Mademoiselle Douville. Her father was footman to the Empress Josephine. When in 1814 and 1815 some of the journals reproached him for not having followed to the last the fortunes of him for whom he had ever professed such deep devotion, he replied that family ties forbade him to leave France, nor could he afford to spoil aught of the happiness of his actual home.

Ibrahim, when entering Madame Bonaparte's service, took the name of Ali. He was the very type of an ugly Arab, and had a forbidding look. I remember a little incident which happened at La

Malmaison, and which may give some idea of his character. One day we were playing on the lawn, when, unintentionally, while running, I tripped him up. He got up in a fury, and, drawing his poniard, which he always carried, he rushed after me to stab me. At first, like the others, I laughed at his tumble, and was amused at seeing him run. But, warned by the shouts of my companions, I looked round to see if he were gaining on me, and perceived at once his weapon and his wrath. I stopped short, my feet firmly planted, and my eyes fixed on the poniard. Luckily, I avoided the blow, though it lightly grazed my chest. Furious in my turn, as may well be believed, I caught hold of his baggy breeches and threw him into the stream close by, which was only about two feet deep. Such a ducking as this served to calm him, and, the poniard having sunk to the bottom, my antagonist became a good deal less dangerous. But in his discomfiture he set up such a howling that Madame Bonaparte heard him, and, as she was so fond of her dear Mameluke, I got a good scolding. Poor Ali, however, was so bad-tempered that he managed to quarrel with everybody, and, at last, had to be sent as a footman to Fontainebleau.

I must return to the story of our campaign.

On June 13th, the First Consul stayed the night at Torre di Galifolo, making this his head-quarters. From the date of our entry into Milan the march of the army had never slackened. General Murat had crossed the Po and taken possession of Piacenza. General Lannes, who, with his valorous van-guard, went ever ahead, had fought a bloody battle at Montebello, he himself assuming this name later on. At the recent arrival of Desaix from Egypt, the First Consul was overjoyed, and it served to inspire the troops with fresh confidence, who adored good, modest Desaix. The First Consul greeted him most cordially, and they had a long interview, lasting three hours. Hereupon, it was announced that General Desaix would assume the command of the Boudet Division. I heard some of the members of this General's suite say that his patience and good-temper had been cruelly tried while crossing by contrary winds, forced delays, the bother of quarantine, and, above all, the churlish conduct of the English, who had been keeping him for some while a prisoner on board their fleet, in sight of the coast of France, although he was the bearer of a passport signed in Egypt by the English authorities after terms of capitulation had been mutually accepted. Indeed, his resentment against

them was most keen, and he vowed that he was mighty sorry that it was not the English that he was now going to fight. Despite the simplicity of his tastes and habits, no one was more eager for glory than this brave general. All his rage against the English was roused merely by the fear that he should not get to Italy in time to win new laurels. Alas! he did but come at the right moment to meet with a glorious, yet untimely, end.

It was on the 14th of June that the famous battle of Marengo was fought. It began at an early hour and lasted all day. I had remained in camp with the First Consul's household. We were but gunshot distance from the field of battle, and news kept pouring in, all of the most conflicting sort. First we heard that the battle was irretrievably lost; then, that we had won the day. At one moment the increase in the number of our wounded and the renewed activity of the Austrian artillery made us think that we were lost. But all at once they told us that this seeming rout was but the result of a daring manœuvre on the part of our chief, and that, by General Desaix's charge, victory had been assured. But it was a victory for which France and the First Consul's heart had to pay dearly. Struck by a bullet, Desaix fell dead, and the

grief of his men only spurred them on to greater feats of courage, and they bayonetted the enemy, already half cut to pieces by General Kellermann's brilliant charge.

The First Consul slept that night on the battle-field. Although he had won a decisive victory, he was yet full of grief, and that evening to Hambart and myself he made several remarks which showed how deeply affected he was at General Desaix's death. France had lost one of her noblest defenders, and he, his best friend. No one knew how much goodness there was in Desaix's heart, nor how much genius in his head. "My dear Desaix," quoth he, "always wanted to die like that." Then, with tears in his eyes, he added, "But need Death have been so prompt in granting his wish?"

There was not a man in all our victorious army that did not share his grief. Rapp and Savary, aides-de-camp of the deceased General, were overwhelmed with despair at the loss of their chief, whom, despite his youth, they called their father. And out of respect for the memory of his friend, the First Consul caused these two young officers to be attached to his staff as aides-de-camp, although no vacancy existed at the time.

Commander Rapp (such was his title then) was ever amiable, courageous, and universally beloved. His frankness—a trifle blunt at times—pleased the Emperor. Scores of times I have heard the latter sing the praises of his aide-de-camp, always alluding to him as "Mon brave Rapp." In battle, this officer was not lucky, and he rarely took part in any engagement without getting wounded. As I am, so to speak, anticipating the course of events, I may as well mention that in Russia, on the eve of the battle of Moscow, the Emperor remarked before me to General Rapp, who had just arrived from Danzig, "Look out, my good fellow; we're going to fight to-morrow; take care of yourself, as Fortune is not wont to favour you overmuch." "Rest assured, Sire," was the reply, "that I shall do my best."

M. Savary displayed the same zeal and loyalty for the First Consul that he had shown towards General Desaix. If any of Rapp's qualities were wanting in him, it certainly was not bravery. Of all those persons surrounding the Emperor, none was more absolutely subservient to his slightest wish. In the course of these Memoirs I shall doubtless have occasion to cite certain examples of such matchless loyalty, for which My Lord Duke of Rovigo certainly received splendid recompense; yet it is only fair to

state that he, at least, never stung the hand of his benefactor, and that to the very last he set an example of gratitude that was only too little imitated.

By a Government order, issued in the following June, it was decided that Desaix's body should be removed to the Saint-Bernard Convent, where a tomb should be set up in sign of the sorrow of France and of the First Consul for him who, by his death, was covered with glory that can never die.[1]

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1 In Paris, two monuments were erected in honour of brave Desaix; one, a statue in the Place des Victoires, and the other a bust in the Place Dauphine. The statue had a theatrical pose about it quite out of keeping with the gravity of manner and perfect naturalness of the original. Moreover, its surprising nudity, the most *antique* part of it scantily concealed by a sword-belt, put spectators to the blush, and served but to provoke coarse jests. The great hero of Waterloo can boast a statue, set up during his lifetime, in Hyde Park—a colossal Achilles—and its grace (or, rather, His Grace) is represented with such fidelity that not a single line, not a single muscle of his martial person is left to the imagination. To make such a parody quite complete, it is the ladies of England—so squeamish in all matters of decency and dignity—who have erected this monument to the glory of My Lord Duke. To come back to Desaix (a long way, too), the Place des Victoires statue was removed during the Empire by order of the Government. As for the bust to be seen to-day in the Place Dauphine, it would be difficult to imagine anything more insignificant, more grimy, or more neglected. In such wise did they treat Desaix; Pichegru, however, had statues in bronze.

CHAPTER V

Return to Milan on our way to Paris—The singer Marchesi and the First Consul—Madame Grassini—We re-enter France by the Mont-Cenis—Triumphal arches—We enter Lyons—Illuminations in Paris—Kléber—Constant falls from his horse—Kindness shown towards him by the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte—Napoleon's liking for Madame D.—Jealousy of Madame Bonaparte—The little house in the Allée des Veuves—The First Consul's precautions with regard to his wife—His way with women.

By this victory of Marengo the conquest of Italy was assured; and deeming his presence more necessary in Paris than at the head of his army, the First Consul left General Massena in command and proceeded to return to France. He marched back through Milan, where he was received with greater enthusiasm than on his first visit. The establishment of a Republic was that which most of the Milanese earnestly desired, and they called the First Consul their saviour because he had delivered them from the Austrian yoke. There was a faction, however, that abhorred change, and could not abide the French army, which was the instrument, nor its young

chief, who was the author. To this party a famous artist, the singer Marchesi, belonged. When we first passed through Milan, the First Consul sent for him, and he let himself be coaxed not a little before he would come. At last he appeared with all the important airs of a man who considers that his dignity has been wounded. The First Consul's extremely simple dress, his short stature and thin, homely features were not calculated to create a profound impression upon this hero of the footlights. When the General received him graciously and very politely requested him to sing an air, Marchesi impertinently replied with this vile pun: "If it's a nice air you want, General, you can't do better than take a turn in the garden." For this courteous rejoinder Signor Marchesi was promptly shown the door, and that same evening a warrant for his arrest was issued, and he was put into prison. Upon our return, the First Consul, whose resentment towards Marchesi the cannon of Marengo had surely extinguished, sent for the artist and once more asked him to sing. This time he behaved politely and modestly, and sang in the most enchanting style. After the concert the First Consul went up and shook him warmly by the hand, loudly complimenting him upon his performance. From that moment peace was

established, and Marchesi did nought else but sing Napoleon's praises.

At this same concert the First Consul was struck by the beauty of a famous songstress, Madame Grassini. He did not find her cruel; and in a few hours the conqueror of Italy had achieved yet another conquest. Next morning she breakfasted with the First Consul and General Berthier in his room, and the latter had orders to provide for the fair vocalist's journey and arrange for her appointment as Court singer in ordinary.

On the 24th, the First Consul left Milan, and we returned to France *viâ* Mont Cenis, travelling with the utmost speed. Everywhere my master was greeted with an enthusiasm that baffles description. Triumphal arches had been set up at the entrance of each town, and, I may say, of each village, while in every canton a distinguished deputation offered an address of welcome and congratulation. Long rows of girls, dressed in white, wearing wreaths of flowers, scattered blossoms in front of Napoleon's carriage and formed his escort until he alighted. Thus the whole journey was as one perpetual festival. In Lyons, the public was in a perfect frenzy; the whole town came out to meet the First Consul, and, amid loud acclamations, he alighted at the Hôtel des

Célestins. The town of Dijon gave him an equally brilliant reception. On July 2nd, at night-time, he reached the Tuileries, and when, next day, the news of his return got abroad all the people crowded into the court-yards and gardens, forcing their way close up to the windows of the Pavillon de Flore, in the hope of catching sight of the saviour of France and the liberator of Italy. That evening rich and poor alike were anxious to illuminate their house or their hut in his honour.

Soon after his arrival in Paris, the First Consul received news of the death of General Kléber. Suleiman's poniard had claimed this great soldier as its victim on the very day that Marengo robbed us of another Egyptian hero. The First Consul was deeply grieved at the news of this assassination. I was a witness, and can affirm this; yet certain of his detractors dared to say that he rejoiced at an event which, if only regarded from a political standpoint, made him lose that which had cost him such efforts to win, and France so much blood and gold. Other wretches, baser and more stupid still, went so far as to assert that the First Consul had actually given orders for the murder of his companion-in-arms and chosen representative in Egypt. For these individuals I have only one reply

—if any reply, indeed, were necessary—and that is, that they never knew the Emperor.

After his return, the First Consul often went with his wife to La Malmaison and stayed there some days. At that time the *valet-de-chambre* who was on duty used to ride behind the carriage. One day, when travelling to Paris, the First Consul, soon after leaving the château, found that he had forgotten his snuff-box, and told me to go back and fetch it. I turned my horse's head about and rode off at a gallop, found the snuff-box, and hastened in pursuit of the carriage. It had only got as far as Ruelle when I overtook it. But just as I reached it my horse slipped on a stone and threw me off into the ditch. It was a nasty fall; my shoulder was put out of joint and one of my arms severely crushed. The First Consul instantly stopped the horses and gave orders for me to be carried to the barracks at Ruelle, and, before continuing his journey, waited to make sure that I was not in any danger. The physician-in-ordinary was summoned to Ruelle, who put my shoulder back into its place and bandaged my arm. I was then carried back, as gently as possible, to La Malmaison. My excellent mistress was so kind as to come and see me, and showed me every attention.

The day that I resumed my duties, after my recovery, I was in the ante-chamber just as the First Consul came out of his closet. Approaching me, he asked after me with evident interest. I replied that, by the kind care of my master and mistress, I had now completely recovered. "That's right, Constant," said the First Consul, "make haste and get quite strong again. If you go on serving me well, I'll take care of you. Here," said he, thrusting three little crumpled pieces into my hand, "that's for you to get some clothes with," and he passed on, without waiting to hear my thanks. When he had gone I looked at the crumpled scraps of paper; they were three bank-notes, each of a thousand francs! Such genuine kindness as this touched me to tears. It must be remembered that at this time the First Consul was not rich, although he was at the head of the Republic. Indeed, at the recollection of this generous act I am deeply moved to-day. I daresay such petty personal details are not interesting to everybody; but it seems to me that they help one to form a just estimate of the Emperor's character, which has been so outrageously misrepresented, and that it shows how he used to treat his household servants. So, too, from this one may judge if the strict economy which he practised in private life (of

which I shall have more to say anon) was, as they said, mere sordid avarice or not rather a prudent rule to which he readily made an exception if urged by his kind-heartedness or his humanity to do so.

I am not certain if my memory deceives me when here recounting a fact which shows the esteem that Napoleon had for the brave fellows in his army, and of which he ever delighted to give a proof. I was one day in his bedroom at the usual hour of his toilet, performing the duties of first valet, as Hambart was either absent or engaged at the moment. Besides servants, there was only an aide-de-camp—brave, modest Colonel Gérard Lacuée—in the room. M. Jerome Bonaparte, then scarcely seventeen, was ushered in. This young man gave his family frequent cause for complaint, and only stood in awe of his brother Napoleon, who scolded him and read him lectures just as if he were his own son. Their talk that day was about Jerome's entering the navy, for which he showed vast disinclination. "Instead of sending me to be bored to death at sea," said Jerome to his brother, "you might just as well make me one of your aides-de-camp." "What? A noodle like you?" replied the First Consul; "wait till a bullet has cut a hole in your cheek and then we'll see." Hereupon he

glanced at Colonel Lacuée, who blushed and looked down like a girl. To understand the compliment implied in that speech, it must be remembered that the Colonel bore the scar of a bullet-wound on his face. The valiant soldier was afterwards killed at Günsberg in 1805. He was one of the cleverest, most intrepid officers, and to the Emperor his death was a source of deep regret.

It was about this time, I believe, that the First Consul became greatly enamoured of Madame D., a most charming and witty young lady. Madame Bonaparte, who had her suspicions, showed signs of jealousy, and her spouse did all that he could to allay her conjugal anxiety. Before visiting his mistress, he would wait until everybody in the château was asleep, and even took the precaution to cross from one room to another in his sleeping-suit, without shoes or slippers. Once morning broke before he came back, and, fearing a scandal, I went to tell Madame D.'s maid what time it was, so that she in turn might acquaint her mistress. Such were my instructions. Five minutes later, I saw the First Consul hurry in, looking somewhat agitated. The reason for this was that, on returning, he had caught sight of one of Madame Bonaparte's maids watching him through a closet window

that looked on to the corridor. After a vehement protest against feminine curiosity, the First Consul commissioned me to interview the young scout from the enemy's camp, and tell her that if she did not want to be dismissed she must hold her tongue. If to threats so fearful he added persuasions of a more enticing kind, in order to buy the inquisitive female's silence, I cannot say; but, either from fear or pelf, she had the good sense to keep her mouth shut. The gay lover, afraid of being again caught like this, instructed me to hire a small house for him in the Allée des Veuves, where, occasionally, he used to meet Madame D.

Such was the First Consul's habitual conduct towards his wife, being ever full of considerateness for her, and taking the utmost pains that no whisper of his infidelities should ever reach her ears. Moreover, mere transient intrigues of this sort never influenced his genuine affection for her in the slightest; and if other women excited his passion, none of them enjoyed his friendship and confidence to such an extent as did Madame Bonaparte. Tales of the Emperor's harshness and brutality towards women are on a par with other calumnies of which he has been the object. If not invariably gallant, he certainly was never rude;

and, strange as the statement may seem, he always professed the greatest veneration for a really virtuous woman, believed in the pleasures of home, and disliked cynicism, whether in morals or in language. If he had a few illicit intrigues himself, it was not his fault that these were not clandestine and most carefully concealed.

CHAPTER VI

The infernal machine — Hortense slightly wounded — Madame Murat's terror—Germain, the coachman—The Author at Feydeau at the time of the explosion—The First Consul returns to the Tuileries—His speech to Constant—The Consular guard—The First Consul's house watched—Supreme loyalty—Innocent Jacobins and guilty Royalists—Grand review—General rejoicings—Reception of the Diplomatic Corps and of Lord Cornwallis — The Regent's diamond.

On December 21st, 1800, Haydn's *Creation* was given at the Opera, "by special command," at which the First Consul had signified his intention of being present with all his family. That day he dined with Madame Bonaparte, his daughter, and the Generals Rapp, Lauriston, Lannes and Berthier. I just happened to be on duty, but as the First Consul was going to the Opera I thought that I should not be wanted at the château, and determined to go to Feydeau, where Madame Bonaparte let me have lodgings close to her own residence. After dinner, which the First Consul got through with his usual celerity, he rose from table, followed by the other

officers, with the exception of General Rapp, who stayed with Madame Bonaparte and Hortense. About seven o'clock the First Consul drove to the Opera with Generals Lannes, Berthier and Lauriston. Half-way along the Rue Saint-Nicaise, the picket preceding the carriage found the roadway barred by a cart, which seemed to have been left standing there by itself. It contained a barrel tightly lashed thereto with ropes, and the officer commanding the escort caused it to be placed near the houses at the right side of the street, when the First Consul's coachman, impatient at such delay, whipped-up his horses, which started off at lightning speed. They had not passed by more than a few seconds than the barrel on the cart burst with a frightful explosion. None of the escort or suite were killed, but several were wounded. Sadder far was the fate of those residing in houses near the spot, for over twenty people lost their lives and over sixty were dangerously hurt. M. Trepsat, an architect, had his thigh broken. The First Consul subsequently decorated him and appointed him architect of the Invalides, saying that for a long while he had been far the greatest invalid of all the architects. All the windows of the Tuileries were smashed, and several houses wrecked; all those in the Rue Saint-Nicaise, and even some in adjoining streets, were

seriously damaged. Part of the wreckage was blown right on to the residence of Consul Cambacérès, and the windows of the First Consul's carriage were shattered.

It most fortunately happened that the carriages of the suite, usually close behind the First Consul, were some distance in the rear. The reason for this was as follows: After dinner Madame Bonaparte sent for a shawl to wear on her way to the Opera. When this was brought, General Rapp laughingly criticised the colour of it, advising Madame to choose another one. She proceeded to argue in defence of her shawl, saying that he knew as much about attacking a toilette as she did about attacking a redoubt.

This playful discussion continued for some time. Meanwhile the First Consul, who never waited for anybody, had started on ahead, and the wretched assassins accordingly set light to their infernal machine. If the coachman driving the First Consul had been a whit less eager to get on, his master must inevitably have perished; and, on the other hand, if Madame Bonaparte had made haste to catch up with her husband, she and her attendants would all have met their deaths. Her carriage, at the moment of the explosion, was just leaving the

Place du Carrousel, and the windows were broken. Madame Bonaparte escaped with a great fright. Mademoiselle Hortense's face was slightly cut by the broken glass, and Madame Caroline Murat, at that time far advanced in pregnancy, was so frightened that she had to be taken home at once. The shock, indeed, had a great effect upon the child to which she subsequently gave birth, and I have been told that Prince Achille Murat is still subject to frequent epileptic fits. The First Consul, as we know, drove straight on to the Opera, where he was received with indescribable enthusiasm, his calm demeanour contrasting strongly with Madame Bonaparte's pallor and agitation, the result of her fears for him, not for herself.

The coachman who drove the First Consul in such lucky fashion was named Germain. He had been with his master in Egypt, and, on one occasion, killed an Arab before the General's eyes. Amazed at his pluck, the First Consul exclaimed, "There's a brave fellow for you! Why, he's a regular Cæsar!" The name stuck to him. It has been affirmed that when the explosion occurred this worthy fellow was drunk, but that is an error; his presence of mind and address on that occasion are cogent evidence to the contrary. When Napoleon

had become Emperor, and went through Paris incognito, Cæsar always drove him, but he did not wear a livery. In the "Memorials of Saint-Helena" it is stated that the Emperor, alluding to Cæsar, declared that he was completely drunk at the time, and mistook the report for a salvo of artillery, never being aware of what had happened until the following day. All this is incorrect; and the Emperor had been misinformed as to Cæsar's condition. He drove fast because he had been told to do so, and because he wanted to make up for lost time. I saw Cæsar myself that very evening, after the accident; he was perfectly sober, and I am indebted to him for some of the details here given. A few days afterwards, four or five hundred Paris coachmen clubbed together and gave a splendid dinner in his honour at twenty-four francs a head.

As already stated, at the time of the explosion I was at the Feydeau Theatre, where I was preparing to enjoy a quiet evening at the play, of which I have always been passionately fond. However, hardly had I taken my seat than the attendant, rushing into the box, exclaimed, "M. Constant, they say that the First Consul has just been blown up; we have heard the report of a fearful explosion, and they declare that he is killed!" By these terrible

words I was struck as by lightning. Hardly knowing what I did, I rushed down the staircase into the street, never waiting to take my hat. As I ran along the Rue Vivienne, past the Palais Royal, I noticed no unusual stir, but in the Rue Saint-Honoré there was a great bustle, and I saw some of the dead or wounded being carried along on litters; they had been rescued from the shattered houses in the Rue Saint-Nicaise. Folk stood about in groups, discussing the matter, unanimous in their execration of the unknown delinquent. Some accused the Jacobins, who, three months previously, had put a dagger into the hands of Ceracci, d'Arena and Topino-Lebrun. Others, again—though these were in a minority—denounced the aristocrats—the Royalists—as alone guilty of so foul a deed. All this I overheard while endeavouring to force my way through the dense and excited crowd, and, directly I could, I made straight for the Carrousel. I flew to the wicket, when the two sentries barred my way with their bayonets. It was no use my declaring that I was valet to the First Consul; bare-headed, scared and untidy as I was, the fellows thought I looked rather suspicious, and they obstinately refused to let me pass, so I begged them to ask the porter, who explained matters, and I was at length

admitted and heard what had happened. Soon afterwards the First Consul arrived, and was instantly surrounded by his officers and all the members of his household; everybody was in a state of intense anxiety. As the First Consul alighted from his carriage, he was calm and smiling—almost merry. Entering the hall, he rubbed his hands and said, "Well, sirs, we've had a narrow escape, haven't we?" He then went into the large apartment on the ground-floor, where many State officials had already assembled. Hardly had they proceeded to offer him their congratulations, than he began talking in so loud a voice that one could hear him in the adjoining room. We were told afterwards that he had had a violent altercation with M. Fouché, Minister of Police, whom he blamed for being ignorant of this plot, of which the Jacobins, as he roundly asserted, were the authors.

That evening, when going to bed, the First Consul laughingly asked if I had been afraid. "More than you were, sir," I replied. I then told him how I had heard the shocking news at Feydeau, and how I ran off without my hat right away to the wicket at Carrousel, where the sentries wanted to bar my passage. He was amused to hear how they swore at me in hideous fashion, and then remarked,

"Well, after all, my dear Constant, one can't very well blame them, for they were but doing their duty. They're brave lads, on whom I can always count." The fact is, the Consular Guard was no whit less devoted to Napoleon than it was afterwards, when it bore the name of Garde Impériale. Directly it was rumoured that the First Consul was in danger, the entire regiment at once assembled in the courtyard of the Tuileries.

After this dreadful catastrophe, which made all France uneasy, and threw so many families into mourning, the police made every effort to discover the offenders. The Minister of Police suspected the Royalists, while the First Consul believed the Jacobins to be guilty, and one hundred and thirty of the leading members of this party were transported without even the formality of trial. But, as we know, the discovery and execution of Saint-Régent and Carbon, the real culprits, proved that the surmises of the Minister of Police were more correct than those of the First Consul.

On the 4th Nivôse, at noon, the First Consul held a grand review in the Place du Carrousel. A huge crowd of citizens assembled there to get a sight of him and show their affection for him, and their indignation at his enemies, who had only courage enough to attack him in such a base

fashion. Hardly had he turned his horse's head towards the front rank of the Consular Guards than there came a wild burst of cheering, while he rode slowly along the lines bowing his acknowledgments of such spontaneous expression of public goodwill. Nor did the cries of "Long live Bonaparte!" "Long live the First Consul!" cease until he got back again to his apartments.

The conspirators who thus vehemently attacked my master could not well have chosen a period less favourable to their design than 1800 and 1801, for at that time the First Consul was beloved, not only for his brilliant military achievements, but most because of the hopes of peace which he held out to France. Such hopes were soon realised. Directly it was rumoured that peace had been concluded with Austria, most of the Parisians assembled beneath the windows of the Pavillon de Flore. Cries of gratitude and joy rent the air, and musicians afterwards serenaded the First Consul, while dancing was kept up all night long. I never saw anything so quaint and merry as this impromptu festival.

When, in October, by the Treaty of Amiens, peace was concluded with England, France found herself freed from the burden of those wars that she had waged for so many years and at the cost of such sacrifices; indeed, the general joy was indescribable

The decrees ordering the disarmament of war-vessels, and authorising fortresses to be placed on a peace footing were accepted as gages of security and well-being. On the day of the reception of Lord Cornwallis, the English ambassador, the First Consul gave instructions for the arrangements to be of the most sumptuous kind. "We must show these haughty British," said he, "that we are not reduced to beggary." The fact is that, before setting foot on French soil, the English had only expected to find everything in ruins, with dearth, disaster and misery everywhere. France had been painted for them in the darkest colours; they believed they had landed on the shores of a barbarous country. Great was their surprise to find that in so short a time the First Consul had remedied so much, and designed to do far more in the future. As Lord Cornwallis entered the Great Hall of the Ambassadors, all these English must have been struck by the appearance of the First Consul, surrounded by his colleagues, the entire diplomatic body and a brilliant military staff. Amid all those dazzling uniforms, his was conspicuous by reason of its simplicity, though on his sword-hilt there glittered the so-called Regent Diamond, which during the time of the Directory had been pledged, and which the First Consul had only recently redeemed.

CHAPTER VII

The King of Etruria—Madame de Montesson—His Majesty not much of a worker—His conversation with the First and Second Consuls—The return of the Bourbons—Don Louis—His stingy ways—He objects to give workmen six francs—The Queen of Etruria—Her want of taste in dress—Her kind-heartedness and good sense—Splendid festivities at M. de Talleyrand's—Madame de Montesson's ball—Soirée at M. Chaptal's to celebrate the anniversary of Marengo—Their Majesties take their departure.

In the month of May, 1801, Don Louis I., Prince of Tuscany, arrived in Paris, *en route* for his new kingdom, the First Consul having just made him King of Etruria. He was travelling as Count of Leghorn, with his wife, the Spanish Infanta, Marie Louise, third daughter of Charles IV. Despite the incognito, which from this modest title it would appear that he wished to observe, perhaps because his little Court was not exactly a brilliant one, he was received at the Tuileries and treated as a King. This Prince was somewhat sickly, the result, as they said, of venereal disease. He was lodged at the Spanish Embassy, formerly the Montessons' residence, and he asked Madame de Montesson, who

lived next door, to allow him to revive a relationship that for a long while had been prohibited. Both he and the Queen of Etruria took great pleasure in the society of this lady, the widow of the Duke d'Orléans, and he spent several hours with her almost every day. A Bourbon himself, he, doubtless, liked to hear all possible details about the Bourbons of France from a person who had lived at their Court and was intimate with their family, being, in fact, bound thereto by ties which, though not officially recognised, were none the less legitimate and valid. Madame de Montesson entertained all the most distinguished members of Parisian society at her house. She had formerly brought together the wreckage of other noble houses, whose scions had been scattered by the Revolution. As a friend of Madame Bonaparte's she was liked and respected by the First Consul, who was anxious to be spoken well of in the most select and fashionable drawing-room of the capital. Indeed, he looked to this high-bred lady, with her exquisite manners, to help him to establish, at his own palace, a Court at which all the habits and customs of a royal Court should be in vogue.

The King of Etruria was not much of a worker, and, consequently, he did not care about the First

Consul, who abhorred indolence. I once heard the latter, in the course of a conversation with his colleague, M. Cambacérès, allude very severely to his royal *protégé*, who, of course, was absent at the time. "There is a good Prince," said he, "who cares little about his dearly and well-beloved subjects. He spends his time in cackling with a lot of old women, to whom, out loud, he says a great deal of good about myself, while writhing inwardly at having to owe his promotion to the head of that 'accursed French Republic.' All he does is to ride, hunt, dance, and go to the play." "They say," observed M. Cambacérès, "that you wanted to make the French people disgusted with Kings by exhibiting to them such a specimen as this, as the Spartans used to make their children disgusted with drunkenness by showing them a tipsy slave. "Not at all, not at all, my dear sir," replied the First Consul; "I do not wish them to be disgusted with royalty, but the stay of His Majesty the King of Etruria will vex a good many honest folk who are trying to bring the Bourbons back into favour."

Perhaps Don Louis ought not to have been so hardly treated, though one must admit he had little wit and less urbanity. When dining at the Tuileries he always replied in a most embarrassed

fashion to the simplest questions put to him by his host; except about the weather, horses, dogs, and other subjects of an equally trivial sort, there was no topic upon which he could converse satisfactorily. His wife, the Queen, often prompted him, whispering hints as to what he should say or do; but this only served to emphasise his want of manners and of ready wit. Others were commonly wont to make merry at his expense, though careful not to do this before the First Consul, who would never have suffered anybody to be wanting in respect to a guest for whom he himself had great regard. A chief source of amusement was the Prince's excessive stinginess, which really went to unheard-of lengths. In proof of this a thousand stories were afloat. Of them all, perhaps, the following is the most extraordinary:

During his stay, the First Consul frequently made Don Louis most splendid presents—carpets, stuffs from Lyons and Sèvres china. His Majesty never said "No," though he persistently declined to give the bearers of these gifts a trifle for themselves. One day, a vase of great price was brought to him, being worth about a hundred thousand crowns. Twelve workmen were required in order to place it in the King's apartment. This done, the workmen

waited for His Majesty to express his satisfaction by a gift of truly princely generosity. However, time passed, yet there were no signs of any reward. At last they spoke to one of the chamberlains, requesting him to mention it to the King of Etruria. The King, still in ecstasies over the beauty of the present and the First Consul's liberality, was greatly astonished at such a request. It was a present, he said; he had to receive, not to give. After much entreaty, the chamberlain managed to get for the workmen a crown apiece, which, however, these good fellows declined to accept.

The Queen of Etruria, so the First Consul thought, was cleverer and more intelligent than her august husband. This Princess did not shine by virtue of her grace or elegance; her dress of the morning lasted her all day long, and she walked about the garden with either a diadem or flowers in her hair, her long train sweeping the dusty paths. She often carried about one of her babies in its swaddling-clothes, so that it may easily be imagined that by the evening Her Majesty's dress had become somewhat disordered. Moreover, she was far from pretty, and had none of those manners which suited her high station; but she was extremely good-natured, greatly beloved by all her servants, and she scrupulously

fulfilled all the duties of a wife and a mother. The First Consul, who highly prized domestic virtues, professed sincere esteem for her.

During the whole month that the King and Queen of Etruria stopped in Paris it was one succession of *fêtes*. M. de Talleyrand entertained them at Neuilly in the most sumptuous and splendid style. I was present, being in attendance on the First Consul. The castle and park were all illuminated by thousands of coloured lamps. First of all there was a concert, and at its conclusion the end of the hall rose like the curtain of a theatre, disclosing the principal square in Florence, the Ducal Palace, a fountain, and Tuscan folk playing and dancing about it and singing couplets in honour of their sovereigns. M. de Talleyrand begged Their Majesties to condescend to mix with their subjects; and hardly had they set foot in the garden than it all became as one vast fairyland—fireworks and Bengal lights blazed in all directions, colonnades, triumphal arches and palaces rose up, built all of lurid flame, which gleamed awhile, then vanished and gave place to other phantom structures of like brilliancy and beauty. Tables were set in all the rooms, and in the gardens as well, so that all the spectators might sup in succession. Finally, a splendid ball

ended this memorable evening of enchantments; it was opened by the King of Etruria and Madame Leclerc (Pauline Borghèse).

Madame de Montesson also gave a ball in honour of Their Majesties, at which the First Consul with his whole family was present. Of all such festivities, however, the most memorable to me was the truly marvellous *soirée* given by M. Chaptal, Minister of the Interior. The day selected was the 14th of June, the anniversary of the battle of Marengo. After the concert, some acting and a ball, as well as another representation of the town and inhabitants of Florence, a splendid supper was served in the garden, under military tents decorated with flags, arms and trophies of war. Each lady was accompanied to table and waited on by an officer in uniform. When the King and Queen of Etruria left their tent a balloon was sent up with the word *Marengo* written across it in letters of fire.

Before leaving Paris, Their Majesties wished to visit the principal public institutions. They went to the Conservatory of Music, to a conference at the Institute, where they did not appear to understand very much, and also to the Mint, where a medal was struck in their honour. M. Chaptal received the Queen's thanks for the splendid way in which he

had welcomed his royal guests. On the eve of his departure, the King had a long private interview with the First Consul. I do not know what took place, but on coming out of the room neither looked particularly satisfied. On the whole, however, Their Majesties had every cause to be most favourably impressed by the welcome accorded to them.

CHAPTER VIII

A madman's passion for Mademoiselle Hortense—Her marriage to M. Louis Bonaparte—It proves unhappy—M. Louis' character—Atrocious calumny concerning the Emperor and his step-daughter—General Duroc weds Mademoiselle Hervas d'Alménara—This lady's portrait—The piano ruined and the watch smashed—Misfortunes of Hortense—The First Consul's journey to Lyons—Festivities and congratulations—Death of the Archbishop of Milan—The Empire poets—The First Consul and his writing-master—The Abbé Dupuis.

At all the *fêtes* which the First Consul gave in honour of the King and Queen of Etruria, Mademoiselle Hortense shone with that brilliancy of youth and grace which made her the pride of her mother and the loveliest ornament at the Court of the First Consul.

About this time she caused a gentleman of very good family to fall violently in love with her. His brain, as I believe, was already slightly affected when this mad passion seized hold of him. The wretched fellow was always hanging about La Malmaison, and as soon as Mademoiselle Hortense drove out, he ran alongside the carriage and threw flowers,

locks of his hair, and verses of his own making at her in the most absurdly affectionate way. If he chanced to meet her out walking, he fell on his knees before her, with a thousand passionate gestures, calling her by all sorts of endearing names. He followed her, in spite of everybody, right into the castle court-yard, behaving in the maddest manner conceivable. Young and full of fun as she was, Mademoiselle Hortense at first found her adorer's grimaces amusing. She read the verses that he addressed to her, and showed them to the ladies who were with her. It was only natural that such nonsensical stuff should make them laugh, but Mademoiselle Hortense, good-natured and charming, like her mother, always used to add compassionately, "Poor man! he deserves to be pitied." At last, the madman's importunities grew positively unbearable. In Paris, he waited outside the doors of the theatres when Mademoiselle Hortense was going to the play, and flung himself at her feet, crying, laughing and gesticulating all at once. This proved more amusing to the bystanders than to Mademoiselle de Beauharnais. Carrat was instructed to remove the unfortunate individual, who, as I believe, was placed in an asylum.

It would have been a lucky thing for Made-

moiselle Hortense if her experience of love had been confined to such ludicrous exhibitions as these, which to her were agreeably comic. But there came a time when she was to know all the grief and chagrin resulting from an ill-assorted union. In January, 1802, she was married to M. Louis Bonaparte, brother of the First Consul. This match was most desirable as regarded age, M. Louis being hardly twenty-four years old and Mademoiselle de Beauharnais not more than eighteen; yet for both it proved the source of long and interminable grief. Yet M. Louis was good-tempered and considerate, studious, and fond of literature, like all the brothers except one; but he had bad health, and, being a constant sufferer, was of a melancholy disposition. All the Emperor's brothers bore a resemblance to himself, but M. Louis was the most like him of any of them, particularly during the time of the Consulate, before Napoleon grew stout. Yet none of the Emperor's brothers had his keen, commanding glance and swift, imperious gestures, which came to him by instinct first, and afterwards were habitual. M. Louis was a modest, peaceable sort of man. It is said that, at the time of his marriage, he was very much attached to a person whose name has never been discovered, and still remains, as I believe,

shrouded in mystery. Mademoiselle Hortense was extremely pretty, with expressive, mobile features. She was graceful, talented and affable, and, like her mother, of an amiable and kindly disposition; but she had not that excessive obligingness, or, to put it plainly, that weakness of character which at times proved so harmful to Madame Bonaparte. Yet here was a woman outrageously traduced by vile calumniators. One is filled with disgust and indignation to find such revolting absurdities set afloat. If such honest purveyors of scandal are to be believed, the First Consul seduced his step-daughter before giving her in marriage to his own brother. It needs but to state such a fact as this in order to perceive its absolute falseness. I, better than anybody else, was acquainted with the Emperor's amours; in clandestine intrigues of this kind he was always afraid of a scandal and hated the fanfaronades of vice. Indeed, I may affirm, on my word of honour, that he never for one moment cherished the base desires attributed to him by his detractors. Just because he was more intimate than anyone else with his step-daughter, his affection for her was of the deepest, tenderest kind; but it was purely a paternal affection, and Mademoiselle Hortense reciprocated it with that respectful regard which a well-bred girl has for her

father. She could have got her step-father to give her anything she liked had not her excessive bashfulness prevented her from asking him. Yet, instead of applying to him direct, she first appealed to his secretary and those about him. Would she have done this if there had been the slightest foundation for all the scandalous reports circulated by her enemies?

Before this marriage, Mademoiselle Hortense had a liking for General Duroc, who was hardly thirty years old, comely in person, and a favourite of Napoleon's, who, aware of his prudent, reserved character, had entrusted him with several important diplomatic missions. As aide-de-camp to the First Consul, general of division, and governor of the Tuileries, he was very intimate with everyone at La Malmaison, and when absent he used regularly to correspond with Mademoiselle Hortense. Yet his indifference to her marrying M. Louis showed how slightly he returned her affection. This much is certain, that he could have had Mademoiselle de Beauharnais as his wife if he had chosen to accept the terms upon which Napoleon gave his step-daughter in marriage. But he was on the look-out for something better, and his customary prudence forsook him just when it should have shown him a

future that could easily have been foreseen, and which was destined to fulfil the desires of one no whit less ambitious than himself. He thus flatly refused, and Madame Bonaparte's influence in another direction gained the upper hand. She saw with what scant friendliness she was being treated by her husband's brothers, and sought to create for herself in this family some support against the storms that incessantly assailed her and strove to deprive her of her husband's love. It was with this end in view that she tried her utmost to bring about a marriage between her daughter and one of her brothers-in-law.

General Duroc probably repented of his rashness later on, when crowns were distributed broadcast among the august family to which he had been free to ally himself; when he saw Naples, Spain, Westphalia, North Italy, the Duchies of Parma, Lucca, &c., become part of the new Imperial dynasty, and when the fair Hortense, who had loved him so much, herself ascended a throne which she would so gladly have shared with the object of her first affections. As for him, he married Mademoiselle Hervas d'Alménara, daughter of a Spanish Court banker—a little woman, very dark, very thin, and most ungraceful, but of humour the most acrid, and with a

most arrogant, exacting, capricious temper. As at her marriage she was to have an enormous dowry, the First Consul sought her as a bride for his chief aide-de-camp. I am told that Madame Duroc used to go so far as to beat her servants, and fly out into a passion with persons who were in no way dependent upon her. When M. Dubois went to tune her piano, if she unfortunately happened to be present, she used to drive him away in the most violent manner, not being able to bear the noise of this process. Once, in one of her strange attacks, she smashed all the notes of the instrument. On another occasion, when M. Mugnier, the Emperor's watchmaker, and the best in all Paris, came with M. Bréguet to bring her a very valuable watch which she herself had ordered, it did not happen to please her, and in her anger she flung the watch down on the floor in M. Mugnier's presence and danced upon it until it was all in little bits. She absolutely refused to pay for it. The Marshal was obliged to settle the bill for this. Thus General Duroc's ill-judged refusal and Madame Bonaparte's scheming served to bring misfortune to two families.

After all, she was but a young woman, spoilt as all only children are spoilt, vivacious as all Spaniards are, and brought up with that indulgence,

even with that neglect, which is so harmful to the proper education of Mademoiselle d'Alménara's compatriots. Time has served to calm such youthful spirits, and the Duchess de Frioul has since given an example of tender devotion to duty, and of great force of character during all the awful misfortunes which have befallen her.

The religious marriage ceremony was performed on January 7th, at the house in the Rue de la Victoire, and the marriage of General Murat with Mademoiselle Caroline Bonaparte—which as yet had only been a civil one—was solemnised on the same day. Louis Bonaparte and his bride looked very sad; she wept bitterly during the ceremony, nor did her tears cease after it was over. She avoided her husband's glance, who seemed too proud and too hurt to offer her the slightest attention. Good Josephine did her best to bring them together. Feeling that this union, which had begun thus ominously, was her work, she sought to compass both her own interests and her daughter's welfare. But her counsels and entreaties proved futile. Scores of times I have seen Madame Louis Bonaparte seek the solitude of her own room, there to weep upon the bosom of a friend. She even shed tears when in the First Consul's *salon;* and it was grievous to see this once brilliant,

merry young woman, who formerly used to do the honours with such grace, withdraw to a corner or a window-recess with one of her most intimate friends, to whom she would sadly confide her troubles. During this interview, from which she came away with reddened, humid eyes, her husband stood pensive and taciturn at the other end of the room.

Her Majesty the Queen of Holland has been blamed for so many things, and all said and written about this Princess is touched with hateful exaggeration. Such exalted fortune as hers made her a mark for every eye, and roused jealous malevolence; yet the envious would none the less have deemed themselves deserving of pity if in her place and obliged to bear her bitter trials. The misfortunes of Queen Hortense began directly she was born. Her father dying on the scaffold and her mother in prison, she was taken care of when yet a little child by certain of the faithful family servants. Her brother—noble, worthy Prince Eugene—had been obliged to serve his apprenticeship in a carpenter's shop, so they say. She had a few years of happiness—or, at any rate, of rest—all the while she was under Madame de Campan's maternal care, and after she left school. But her perverse inclinations and her unhappy marriage brought for

her fresh sorrows. The death of her first-born, whom the Emperor desired to adopt and whom he meant to make his successor; the divorce of her mother; the terrible death of her dearest friend, Madame de Brocq,[1] by falling over a precipice; the overthrow of the Imperial throne, which made her lose her rank and title as Queen, a loss less keenly felt than the mischance which befel her step-father; in brief, her endless domestic bickerings, unlucky lawsuits, and her grief at having to lose her son by her husband's order—these are but some of the catastrophes in a life which one might have thought was destined to be full of happiness.

The day after Hortense's wedding, the First

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1 Mademoiselle Adèle Auguié married General de Brocq, Grand Marshal to the Court of Holland. Queen Hortense, when at Aix in 1812, was very fond of making climbing excursions with her friend up some of the steepest mountains. On one occasion a torrent blocked their path, and to cross it one had to walk along a single, slender plank. Supported by her groom, Hortense went first. Turning round to encourage Madame de Brocq, she was horrified to see her slip and fall headlong down the precipice. The Queen shrieked aloud in terror, but she never lost her presence of mind. Everything to rescue the unfortunate lady was promptly done; yet all was of no avail. Her mutilated body was recovered after a while in a shocking state, and removed to Saint-Leu, where all the inhabitants were plunged into deep distress. Madame de Brocq used to distribute the Queen's numerous bounties. The tears provoked by her dreadful death were indeed deserved.

Consul set out for Lyons, where the deputies of the Cisalpine Republic awaited him, having assembled there to elect a president. At all the *fêtes* given in his honour he was continually being congratulated upon the miraculous way in which he had escaped from the machinations of his foes. This journey differed in no respect from those which he afterwards took as Emperor. On arriving at Lyons he received a visit from the various municipal authorities and the members of the Italian *Consulte*. Madame Bonaparte, who accompanied her husband, went with him to the play, and shared the honours of the splendid festival arranged by the municipality. The day that the *Consulte* proclaimed the First Consul President of the Italian Republic he reviewed the garrison troops in the Place des Brotteaux, and recognised in their ranks several soldiers who had taken part in the Egyptian campaign, to whom he chatted some time. On all these occasions the First Consul wore the same dress as he had at La Malmaison, and which I have elsewhere described. He rose early, took horse, and inspected the public works, among others those in the Place Belcour, the first stone of which he laid on his return from Italy. He surveyed the Brotteaux, inspecting and examining everything, and set to work with indefatigable energy

on coming home, just as if he were at the Tuileries. He rarely changed his dress, only doing so when some of the officials or leading inhabitants of the town were his guests at table. To all requests he listened most kindly. Before leaving, he presented the Mayor of Lyons with a decoration, and gave the Papal Legate a handsome snuff-box, ornamented with his portrait. The various members of the Senate also received gifts; nor were they wanting in generosity themselves. They gave Madame Bonaparte some magnificent diamonds, besides other precious stones.

On reaching Lyons, the First Consul was much grieved at hearing of the sudden death of a worthy prelate whom he had known during his first Italian campaign. The Archbishop of Milan, in spite of his great age, came to Lyons to see the First Consul, to whom he was deeply attached. The peasant folk of Pavia had revolted because certain fanatics succeeded in persuading them that the French were going to destroy their religion. The Archbishop of Milan sought to convince them that their fears were baseless by driving about with General Bonaparte. The aged prelate bore the journey to Lyons excellently, and seemed in good health and spirits. M. de Talleyrand, who had arrived there

a few days before the First Consul, gave a dinner to the Cisalpine deputies and the chief notables of the town. The Archbishop of Milan was on his right. Hardly had he sat down when, while about to speak to M. de Talleyrand, he fell back in his chair a corpse.

On the 12th of January, the city of Lyons gave a grand concert and ball in honour of the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte. At eight o'clock, the three Mayors, accompanied by the Festival Committee, went to fetch their illustrious guests at Government House. I still seem to see the huge amphitheatre, splendidly decorated and lighted up by countless candles and lustres, with boxes draped with the most costly stuffs, and filled with brilliantly dressed ladies—some young and beautiful, and all smart. The playhouse had been chosen as the scene of the *fête*. Upon the entry of the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte, who, advancing, took the arm of one of the Mayors, there were thunders of applause. All at once all the decorations in the theatre disappeared, and the Place Bonaparte, formerly the Place Belcour, appeared just as it had been restored according to the First Consul's instructions. There was a pyramid in the centre, surmounted by a statue of Napoleon, who

was represented leaning upon a lion. Various trophies and bas-reliefs ornamented the base, one side showing the battle of Arcola, the other that of Marengo.

When the first transports of enthusiasm had subsided there came a great silence, and then one heard strains of delicious music, together with songs in praise of the First Consul, his wife, the warriors in his suite, and the representatives of the Italian Republics. The singers and musicians were all local amateurs, and were afterwards personally complimented by the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte.

What I chiefly remarked about the couplets sung on this occasion (ordinary ones enough), was that the First Consul was belauded in terms which all the Empire poets hereafter made use of. All the most extravagant forms of flattery had been used during the Consulship, so that, in subsequent years, they had necessarily to be repeated. Thus, in the Lyons rhymes, the First Consul was styled "The God of Victory," "Conqueror of the Nile and of Neptune," "Saviour of the Fatherland," "The Peacemaker of the World," "The Arbiter of Europe." The French soldiers were transformed into "Friends and comrades of Alcides," &c. This was really

taking the wind out of the sails of all future bards. The festivities were brought to a conclusion by a ball, which lasted until daybreak. The First Consul was present for a couple of hours, during which time he conversed with the magistrates of the town.

While the most notable citizens were entertaining their guests in this magnificent fashion, the people, notwithstanding the cold, danced and made merry in the public squares. About midnight some beautiful fireworks were let off in the Place Bonaparte.

After a stay of some eighteen days at Lyons, we set out on our way back to Paris. The First Consul and his wife still preferred to reside at La Malmaison. I think it must have been soon after Napoleon's return that a man, very shabbily dressed, asked for an interview. The First Consul had him shown into his closet, and asked him who he was. "General," replied the timid visitor, "it was I who had the honour of giving you writing-lessons in the Brienne school." "And a jolly bad pupil you turned out!" cried the First Consul, gaily; "I must compliment you upon your success." Then he began to laugh heartily, and said a few kind words to the good man, whose timidity had not been lessened by the foregoing speech. A few days

afterwards, the writing-master received from the worst of all his pupils at Brienne (the Emperor's handwriting is well known) a pension sufficient to provide for all his wants.

Another of Napoleon's old teachers, the Abbé Dupuis, had been given the post of private librarian at La Malmaison. He always lived there, and it was there that he died. He was a modest, retiring man, who passed for being a scholar. The First Consul often paid him a visit in his rooms, and showed him all the attention and regard imaginable.

CHAPTER IX

The Law of Cults proclaimed—Conversation on this subject—The countersign—Abbé Bernier and Cardinal Caprara—The red hat and the red cap—Dress of the First Consul and his colleagues—The first Te Deum *chanted in Notre Dame—The Republican calendar—General Abdallah-Menou—His pluck in facing the Jacobins—His romantic death—The Legion of Honour—The First Consul at Ivry—He reaches Rouen—The Mayor drives with him—Generals Soult and Moncey—A corporal dines with the First Consul—Visit to Havre and Honfleur—Departure for Fécamp and Dieppe—Return to Saint-Cloud.*

On the day of the proclamation of the Law of Cults, the First Consul rose early and sent for his servants to dress him as usual. While thus engaged, I saw M. Joseph Bonaparte come into his room with the Consul Cambacérès.

"Well," said the First Consul to him, "we're going to hear Mass. What does Paris think of that?"

"Many people," replied M. Cambacérès, "propose to hiss the piece on its first performance if they don't find it amusing."

"If anybody hisses I'll have him turned out by the Consular Guard."

"But if the grenadiers begin hissing like the rest?"

"Oh! I am not afraid of that. My old soldiers will go to Notre Dame, here, just as at Cairo they used to go to the mosque. They will watch what I do, and, seeing their General look grave and decorous, they will maintain the same demeanour, saying to themselves, 'That's the countersign.'"

"I am afraid," said M. Joseph Bonaparte, "that the officers won't prove so obliging. I have just left Augereau fretting and fuming at your 'clericomania,' as he calls it. It is not so easy to bring him and a few more within the pale of Our Holy Church."

"Bah! So Augereau's like that, is he? He is only a brawler who makes a lot of noise; yet, if he had some silly little cousin, he'd put him into a seminary, so that I might afterwards make him an almoner. By-the-bye," continued the First Consul, addressing his colleague; "when is your irascible brother going to take possession of his see at Rouen? Do you know that he has got the finest archbishopric in all France? He'll be cardinal before the year is out; that's settled."

The Second Consul bowed. From that moment

his manner towards Napoleon was that of a courtier rather than of an equal.

The plenipotentiaries who had been commissioned to discuss and sign the Papal Concordat were MM. Joseph Bonaparte, Crétet and the Abbé Bernier. The latter I saw once or twice at the Tuileries. He had once been chief of the Chouans, though there was nothing now to indicate this. Continuing the conversation already chronicled above, the First Consul alluded to the debates about the Concordat.

"The Abbé Bernier," said he, "terrified the Italian prelates by the vehemence of his logic. One might have thought he was leading a charge of *Vendéens* against the Blues. Nothing was stranger than the contrast of his rude, captious manners with the polished, dulcet tone of the prelates. Two days ago, Cardinal Caprara came in a great state of alarm to ask me if it were true that, during the War of the Vendée, the Abbé Bernier constructed an altar with the corpses of Republicans, and celebrated Mass on it. I said that I did not know, but that it might well be so. 'Oh, General!' cried the astounded Cardinal, 'it's not a red *hat* that the man deserves, but a red *cap!*' I am very much afraid," continued Napoleon, "that this may damage Bernier's chances of a biretta."

When the First Consul had finished dressing, these gentlemen left him and went to get ready for the ceremony. That day Napoleon wore his First Consul's uniform, a red coat, without facings and braided with gold. His sword, which he had brought back with him from Egypt, hung from a narrow, yet choicely-embroidered, belt. He kept on his black stock, and would not wear a lace cravat. For the rest, like his colleagues, he wore tight hose and shoes. A French hat, with flowing tricolour plumes, completed this handsome costume.

A strange sight for Parisians was this first celebration of Holy Mass at Notre Dame. Many people went thither as if to a playhouse; and many more, chiefly army men, found it more a matter for joking than for edification. As for those who during the Revolution had striven with all their might to upset the religion, which now the First Consul sought to re-establish, they could scarcely hide their fury and chagrin.

For the lower classes the *Te Deum* chanted that day counted merely as fresh food for their curiosity. But many of the middle classes were glad to go back to the old religion in which they had been first brought up, being pious folk who regretted the suppression of devotional exercises. It is certain, too,

that all were glad to have Sunday once more as a day of rest and recreation. The Republican calendar had doubtless been most ingeniously devised, though at first it struck one as utterly ridiculous to replace the Saints' days figuring in the old calendar by days set apart for the Donkey, the Pig, the Turnip, the Onion, &c. And again, if cleverly planned, its divisions were far from convenient, and I recollect what a witty man once remarked about this, who, for that matter, approved of the Republican system except as it applied to the almanac. When the decree of the Convention was published ordering the adoption of the Republican calendar, he said, "It's no good, for they've got two enemies who will never give in —the beard and the white shirt."

The fact is, for the labouring class as well as for all who had work of a hard nature to do, the interval between one *décadi* and another was too great. Whether this were the result of ingrained habit, I cannot say; but the people, accustomed to work six days running and rest on the seventh, found nine consecutive working days too much for them, so the suppression of these *décadis* met with universal approval.

A few days after the solemn re-establishment of the Catholic religion, I saw an officer arrive at

the Tuileries who possibly would have been just as pleased to see the religion of Mahomet established in Paris and Notre Dame transformed into a mosque. He was the last of the Egyptian generals who, as they said, became a Mussulman at Cairo—the *ci-devant* Baron de Menou. Despite his recent defeat by the English, General Abdallah-Menou was well received by the First Consul, who soon afterwards appointed him Governor-General of Piedmont. General Menou possessed dauntless courage; of this he gave repeated proof, not only on the battle-field, but in other circumstances more perilous and more trying. After the fateful 10th of August, though he belonged to the Republican party, he was seen to follow Louis Seize to the Assembly, and by the Jacobins he was denounced as a Royalist. In 1795, when the Faubourg Saint-Antoine rose in a body and attacked the Convention, General Menou hemmed in the insurgents and disarmed them; but he opposed the hideous mandate of the Convention Committee ordering the whole Faubourg to be burnt in order to punish the inhabitants for their perpetual insurrections. Some time after this, having refused to massacre certain districts in Paris marked out for vengeance by the Convention, he was handed over to a Commission that would soon have ordered

his execution had not General Bonaparte strained every effort to save his life. Such repeated acts of bravery and generosity were assuredly sufficient to make one overlook this officer's overweening pride, whose vaunt it was—and a rightful vaunt, too—that he had armed the National Guards and had replaced the white flag by the tricolour standard, which he spoke of as "My flag." From the governorship of Piedmont he passed on to that of Venice, and, despite his threescore years, died there of love for an actress whom he followed from Venice to Reggio.

The institution of the Order of the Legion of Honour preceded the proclamation of Life Consulship by a few days. This proclamation was celebrated by a festival on August 15th, the anniversary of the First Consul's birthday, and this was the first time that it was kept in such festive style. He had then just attained his thirty-third year.

In the following October I accompanied the First Consul to Normandy. We stopped at Ivry, where he visited the battle-field, saying on arrival, "Honour to the memory of the best Frenchman that ever sat upon the throne of France!" And he gave orders for the column to be set up again which had formerly been erected in memory of the victory won by Henri Quatre. The Mayor of Ivry,

M. Lédier, accompanied Napoleon on this occasion, who chatted for a long while with him and seemed glad of his companionship. The Mayor of Evreux did not show to such advantage, and Napoleon brusquely interrupted him when in the middle of some complimentary speech to ask him if he knew his colleague, the Mayor of Ivry. "No, General," replied the Mayor. "Well, so much the worse for you. I advise you to make his acquaintance."

From Evreux we went on to Rouen, which we reached at three o'clock in the afternoon. M. Chaptal, Minister of the Interior, M. Beugnot, Prefect of the Department, and M. Cambacérès, Archbishop of Rouen, came out to meet the First Consul some little distance from the city. The Mayor, M. Fontenay, was waiting at the gates, ready to present him with the keys. Napoleon kept them for a short time and then gave them back to the Mayor, saying, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the crowd that surrounded his carriage, "Citizens, I cannot do better than entrust the keys of your city to this worthy magistrate who is so eminently deserving of my confidence and your own." He bade M. Fontenay be seated in his carriage, saying that "he desired to honour Rouen in the person of its Mayor."

Madame Bonaparte was in the carriage as well, while General Moncey, Inspector-General of the Gendarmerie, rode on the right. It were vain to try and describe the enthusiasm of the Rouennais at Napoleon's arrival. An immense crowd assembled outside the Prefecture, where the First Consul was staying, the gardens being lighted-up in brilliant fashion. Whenever he appeared on the terrace, bursts of applause and hearty cheers rent the air.

Next morning, after riding through the town and visiting the various places of interest, the First Consul attended Mass at eleven o'clock in the chapel of the Prefecture, the Archbishop officiating. An hour later he received the Departmental Council, the Prefecture Council, the Municipal Council, the clergy of Rouen, and the magistrates. In the evening, Madame Bonaparte held a reception for the wives of the several functionaries, at which the First Consul was present.

On Wednesday, at an early hour, we set out for Elbœuf, returning to Rouen the same day. On the following day we left for Havre, at six o'clock in the morning. We stopped at Caudebec for breakfast. The Mayor of this place presented to the First Consul a corporal who had been all through the Italian campaign. His name was Roussel, I think.

He had received a sabre of honour for his brave conduct at Marengo. He happened to be on furlough at Caudebec, and asked the First Consul for permission to mount guard at the door of his apartments. This was granted, and when Napoleon and Madame Bonaparte sat down to table, they used to call Roussel, and he was invited to breakfast or to dine with his old General. At Havre and Dieppe, the First Consul used also to invite to his table all those soldiers or sailors who had received swords, guns or hatchets of honour. He stopped at Bolbec for half-an-hour, examining the industrial produce of the district with great interest, complimenting the guard of honour which preceded him upon its smart appearance, thanking the clergy for their prayers for his welfare, and giving a handsome sum to the poor of the place. When he reached Havre, the town was illuminated. The First Consul and his numerous suite walked between two rows of lamps, which made a fiery hedge on either side; the ships in the harbour seemed one huge flaming forest, their masts and rigging being lighted up by coloured lamps. On the day of his arrival at Havre, the First Consul only received part of the local authorities; he soon afterwards retired, pleading fatigue. But the next morning, at six o'clock, he was in the

saddle, and rode out and about till past two o'clock, inspecting various places, among them the citadel. About three o'clock, the First Consul began to receive the authorities, discussing in detail the alterations necessary to their harbour, so that the "harbour of Paris," as he termed it, might reach the utmost degree of prosperity. He invited the Sub-prefect, the Mayor, and other dignitaries to lunch with him.

In the evening, the First Consul went to the theatre, where they played a light, amusing piece, which greatly pleased the illustrious visitors. The illuminations were even more brilliant than on the previous evening. I can remember that most of the transparencies bore the inscription—"18 Brumaire, year VIII."

On Sunday, at seven o'clock in the morning, after having visited the arsenal and docks, the First Consul went out in a small boat, and spent some hours on the water, the weather being extremely fine. Several boats formed an escort, full of fine ladies and gentlemen, besides musicians, who played airs of which the First Consul was fond. Some hours were also devoted to the reception of various merchants, when the First Consul stated how glad he was to have this opportunity of

discussing Havre's commercial relations with the colonies. There was a *fête* that evening, given by the Guild of Commerce, at which the First Consul was present for half-an-hour.

On Monday, at five a.m., he embarked for Honfleur, on board a lugger. At the time we started the weather was somewhat threatening, and some folk advised the First Consul not to go. Madame Bonaparte, getting to hear this, implored her husband not to sail, but he, laughing, embraced her before he went on board, and told her she was a coward. No sooner had he done this than the wind suddenly dropped, and the weather became gloriously fine. Upon his return to Havre the First Consul held a review in the Place de la Citadelle, and visited the artillery barracks. Next day we left for Dieppe. On arriving at Fécamp the town presented a strange appearance. All the inhabitants of the town and its outlying villages formed a procession, in the wake of the clergy, and sang a *Te Deum* for the anniversary of the 18th Brumaire. These countless voices, all praying to heaven for him, greatly moved the First Consul, and he said, during lunch, that this chanting had touched him far more than any other music, however brilliant.

We reached Dieppe at six p.m., and, after the customary congratulations, the First Consul retired. At eight the next morning he visited the harbour, watched the fishing for a good while, and then visited the Faubourg du Pollet and the works that had been begun there. To lunch with him he invited the Sub-prefect, the Mayor, and three sailors who had received hatchets of honour for their bravery during an engagement at Boulogne. He ordered a sluice to be constructed in the lower harbour, and the canal to be carried on right up to Paris. From Dieppe we went to Gisors and Beauvais, and at last the First Consul and his wife returned to Saint-Cloud, after a fortnight's absence, during which time workmen had been actively engaged in restoring this old Royal residence, which the First Consul had decided to accept, as I shall shortly explain.

CHAPTER X

Effect of his Normandy visit upon the First Consul — The creation of the Empire — Memoirs and history — Madame Bonaparte's suite — Mesdames de Rémusat, de Tallouet, de Luçay, and de Lauriston — Mademoiselle d'Arberg and Mademoiselle de Luçay—Sagacity of the Court—MM. de Rémusat, de Cramayel, de Luçay, and Didelot—The Palace refused and afterwards accepted — The Baubles — Marie Antoinette's servants better treated—Fire at Saint-Cloud—How the Emperor used to visit his wife at night—Marital duties triumphantly performed—Caught in the act—Excessive severity towards a young lady—Arms of honour and the troopers — The Baptism of Blood — The First Consul as ploughman — His audience — The author admitted to the General's intimacy—Cordial reception and curious interview.

THE First Consul's journey through the wealthiest, most enlightened departments of France must have helped to efface many fancied difficulties which at first he feared might hinder him in the execution of his scheme. He had been greeted everywhere right royally, and not he alone, but Madame Bonaparte also had received honours such as are usually reserved for crowned heads. Thus the homage then paid to them differed in no way from that which was theirs under the Empire when Their

Majesties travelled abroad. For this reason I have been at pains to give certain details concerning their reception. If these seem to some of my readers over-lengthy and wanting in interest, I would ask them to remember that I am not writing merely for those who lived under the Empire. The generation that witnessed all these great things and could closely observe from the very outset of his career the greatest man of this century—this generation is making room for others who can but base their judgment upon hearsay. That which to actual eye-witnesses is familiar, is not so for others who must needs have that related to them which they could not see. Moreover, details neglected as futile and unimportant by grave historians are quite in their proper place if included in mere random recollections such as these, and sometimes are a help in allowing one to form a just appreciation of this period. For instance, it appears to me that the splendid reception which the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte received during their tour through Normandy, serves to show that the head of the State would not have much to fear in the way of opposition—at any rate, on the part of the people —if ever it should please him to change his title and proclaim himself Emperor.

Soon after our return, by a decision of the Consuls, Madame Bonaparte was granted four ladies, "in order to help her to do the honours of the palace." These ladies were Mesdames de Rémusat, de Tallouet, de Luçay, and de Lauriston. Under the Empire they became Court ladies. Madame de Luçay often made herself the laughing-stock of the servants by her little stingy ways; yet, in other respects, she was good-natured and obliging. Madame de Rémusat was a woman of sterling merit and excellent wisdom. She was somewhat haughty in manner: this was the more noticeable because M. de Rémusat was affability itself.

Among the suite there was Madame de la Rochefoucault, of whom I shall have occasion to speak of later. Madame de Luçay was replaced by Madame de la Vallette, since celebrated by reason of her splendid devotion to her husband. The twenty-four French ladies-in-waiting included: Mesdames de Rémusat, de Tallouet, de Lauriston, Ney, d'Arberg, Louise d'Arberg, de Walsh-Sérent, de Colbert, Lannes, Savary, de Turenne, Octave de Ségur, de Montalivet, de Marescot, de Bouillé, Solar, Lascaris, de Brignolé, de Canisy, de Chevreuse, Victor de Mortemart, de Montmorency, Matignon, and Maret.

There were twelve Italian ladies-in-waiting, each being on duty for a month at a time, in such a way that one Italian and two Frenchwomen were always together. At first the Emperor did not wish to have any ladies-in-waiting who were unmarried, but he made an exception to the rule in favour of Mademoiselle Louise d'Arberg (afterwards Countess de Lobau) and Mademoiselle de Luçay, who married the Count Philippe de Ségur, author of the excellent work on the Russian campaign. These young ladies by their conduct, at once discreet and reserved, showed that one can behave very prudently even at Court.

La Malmaison was no longer large enough for the First Consul, whose household, like that of Madame Bonaparte, grew every day more numerous. A more commodious residence became necessary; and Napoleon chose Saint-Cloud.

The residents at Saint-Cloud had sent a petition to the legislative body requesting the First Consul to choose the château as his summer residence, and the Assembly at once informed him of this invitation, which they warmly seconded. The General, however, formally refused, saying that when the duties imposed upon him by the people had been discharged, he would accept the honour

of a reward which the people should bestow upon him; but so long as he was head of the Government, he would accept nothing. Despite so determined a reply as this, the Saint-Cloud residents, to whom it was vastly important that their offer should meet with approval, renewed their proposal when Napoleon was appointed First Consul for life; and this time he consented to accept it. The expenses for repairing and furnishing were immense, being far in excess of the original estimate. Nevertheless, he found fault with the furniture and appointments. He complained of this to M. Charvet, *concierge* of La Malmaison, whom he had appointed to a like post at the new palace, with instructions to superintend the furnishing of the various apartments. He declared that "the rooms had been furnished just as if they were for some 'kept woman'—all nicknacks, curl-papers, and what not; but nothing sensible." On this occasion he gave another proof of his eagerness to do good, heedless of prejudice, which still flourished. Knowing that at Saint-Cloud there were a great many of Marie Antoinette's old servants, he instructed M. Charvet to offer them either their former posts or a pension. Most of them preferred to resume service. In 1814, they were far from acting

thus generously. All the servants were dismissed, even those who had been in Marie Antoinette's employ.

The First Consul had not long been established at Saint-Cloud when this castle, transformed at enormous cost into a royal residence, all but fell a prey to the flames. Below the central hall there was a guard-room. One night, when the soldiers had made too big a fire, the stove got so hot that an arm-chair leaning against it caught fire, and soon all the furniture in the room was in a blaze. The officer on duty promptly told the hall-porter, and they both roused General Duroc, who, bidding everyone keep profound silence, organised a system for extinguishing the fire by passing buckets of water in rapid succession to the soldiers, so that in two or three hours it was got under. It was not until the next morning that the First Consul, Josephine, Hortense, and all the inmates of the château, knew what had happened, when all of them, especially the First Consul, expressed their great satisfaction at the attentiveness shown in not waking them. To prevent, or at any rate to render such accidents less dangerous in the future, the First Consul instituted a night-watch at Saint-Cloud, and at all

his other residences, which was called *chambre de veille.*

When first Napoleon came to live at Saint-Cloud, he always slept in his wife's bed. Later on, etiquette caused him to break this rule, and thus conjugal affection cooled somewhat. Indeed, the First Consul at last occupied apartments at some distance from those of Madame Bonaparte. In order to go to her, he had to walk down a long servants' passage, with rooms on either side occupied by members of the household, servants and others. When the First Consul intended to spend the night with his wife, he first of all undressed in his own rooms, and then went forth in a dressing-gown and a handkerchief tied round his head. Torch in hand, I walked in front. At the end of the corridor there was a staircase, with fifteen or sixteen steps, leading to Madame Bonaparte's rooms. For her a visit from her husband was a great delight; everybody in the house was told about it next day. I seem to see her now, informing everyone she met, and rubbing her little hands as she said, "I got up late this morning; but, you see, that's because Bonaparte came and spent the night with me!" On those days she was more than usually amiable, never refusing any-

body anything, so that we always got just what we wanted. Of this, I personally had repeated proof.

One day, as I was escorting the First Consul on one of these conjugal visits, we perceived in the passage a well-dressed young man coming out of the bedroom of one of Madame Bonaparte's women. He tried to slip away, but the First Consul shouted out, "Who's there? Where are you going? What are you about? What is your name?" It was one of Madame Bonaparte's valets. Startled by such sudden questionings, he answered in trembling tones that he had just been to deliver a message from Madame Bonaparte. "All right," said the First Consul; "but don't let me catch you at it again!" Convinced that the gallant would profit by this lesson, the General never asked him his name, nor that of his lady-love.

This reminds me that he was far more severe in the case of one of Madame Bonaparte's waiting-maids. She was young and extremely pretty, and made a deep impression upon two sentimental aides-de-camp, Messieurs R. and E. They were for ever sighing at her door, overwhelming her with flowers and love-letters. The young woman (at least, so everybody in the house thought) made no sort of

return for such homage. Josephine was very fond of her; yet, nevertheless, when the First Consul became aware of these gallantries on the part of the gentlemen, he grew very angry and had the girl promptly dismissed, in spite of her tears and the entreaties both of Madame Bonaparte and good General R., who naïvely declared that it was all his fault, as the little one deserved every praise for not having listened to him. But against the First Consul's decision nothing could avail. His only reply was, "I won't have any disorder in my house—no scandal!"

Whenever the First Consul distributed arms of honour, a banquet was given at the Tuileries, to which all, no matter what their grade, were admitted if they deserved such rewards. At these dinners, which were given in the large gallery of the château, there were sometimes as many as two hundred guests. General Duroc acted as Master of the Ceremonies, and the First Consul was careful to tell him to place colonels and generals side by side with the common soldiers. Indeed, it was to these latter that he bade his servants show most attention, letting them have everything they could want in the way of food and drink. These were the longest meals at which I ever saw the Emperor preside; his

good-temper and gaiety were at their height, and he strove his utmost to put his guests at their ease, though with some this was a very difficult task. Nothing was funnier than to see these worthy troopers, standing about two feet off the table, never daring to touch either napkin or bread, blushing to the very roots of their hair, and craning their necks towards their general as if waiting for the word of command. The First Consul made each one tell the story of the act of valour which had won such national reward, occasionally bursting out into fits of laughter at some of these quaint recitals. He begged them to make a good meal, and now and again he drank to their health; yet, for some, such encouragement proved futile, and the footmen removed their plates in succession without these having ever been touched. Such constraint, however, did not check their enthusiasm, nor in any way diminish their glee as they rose from table. "*Au revoir!* my good fellows," cried the First Consul; "you must very soon baptise those new-born babes for me," pointing to the swords of honour. How soon they did this, heaven only knows.

Such kindly treatment of common soldiers on the part of Napoleon reminds me of an incident that occurred at La Malmaison, and which may

serve to confute the charges made against him of haughtiness and severity.

One day the First Consul went out very early in the morning, wearing his grey overcoat and accompanied by General Duroc. They went towards Marly, and as they walked along, talking, they saw a labourer ploughing in a field.

"Look here, my good fellow," said the First Consul, stopping, "your furrow isn't straight; you don't know your trade."

"Don't I? It ain't the likes o' you as can teach me, anyway. You'd find it jolly hard to do it as well as myself, I reckon."

"I'm damned if we should."

"All right, guv'nor, then, try!"

So saying, the ploughman gave up his place to Napoleon, who caught hold of the handle of the plough, and, whipping up the horses, sought to start upon his lesson. But so unused was he to the work that not a step could he make in a straight line.

"Hold hard; that'll do," cried the peasant, stopping him. "Your work is absolutely good for nothing. Everyone to his trade; you'd better go on walking; that's your business."

But this the First Consul did not do before paying for the moral lesson which the ploughman

had just given him, and by a present of two or three louis General Duroc was instructed to compensate Hodge for his loss of time. Amazed at such bounty, the yokel left his plough to go and tell others of his adventure. Meeting a woman by the way, he gave it as his opinion that he had come across two "big swells," to judge by what he still held in his hand. The woman, being shrewder, asked how the strangers were dressed, and, from the description given, she guessed that it must have been the First Consul and one of his suite. Dumbfounded for awhile, the ploughman next day plucked up courage, and, donning his best clothes, presented himself at the entrance of La Malmaison and asked to speak with the First Consul, to thank him, as he said, for his handsome present of the previous morning.

I went to apprise the First Consul of this visit, and he ordered the man to be admitted at once. While I had gone to announce him, the peasant, to use his own expression, had plucked up all his courage in order to prepare for this grand interview. I found him standing in the middle of the hall (he had not dared to sit down on one of the benches, which, though of the plainest, to him seemed splendid), meditating upon what he would say to Napoleon by way of thanks. I went first; he followed, treading

gingerly on the carpet; and on opening the door of the study, he bowed, and made signs for me to walk first. When the First Consul had nothing of a secret nature to discuss or to dictate, he willingly left his study-door open. On this occasion he motioned me not to shut it, so I was able to see and hear all that passed. On entering the room, the worthy yokel began by bowing to the back of M. de Bourrienne, who could not see him, as he was writing at a little table in the window-recess. The First Consul watched him making such obeisances, as he leaned back in his chair and whittled one of the arms of it with a penknife—an old trick of his. At last he said:

"Well, my good man." (The peasant, turning round, recognised him, and bowed again.) "Well, has the harvest been a fine one this year?"

"Not so bad, may it please Your Worship."

"To make the soil fertile," continued Napoleon, "it has to be ploughed, eh? Fine gentlemen are no good at that sort of work, are they?"

"No offence, General, but gentry have got too soft a hand to guide the plough. To move those sort of instruments it wants a good stout fist."

"That's true," replied the First Consul, smiling. "But a big strong fellow like you must have handled

other things besides a plough. A good musket, for instance, or the hilt of a stout sword, eh?"

The peasant drew himself up proudly. "General, in my time I did like others. I had been married for five or six years when those b—— of Prussians (excuse me, General) entered Landrecies. Everybody had to serve; you got a gun given you, and a cartouche-box, and then—right-about-face! quick march! But, bless my soul! we weren't rigged out like those great big chaps down in the court-yard yonder!" (He meant the grenadiers of the Consular Guard.)

"How was it you left the service?" enquired the First Consul, who seemed to take great interest in this conversation.

"'Everyone in their turn,' General, as the saying is. Like everyone else, I got a sabre-cut, just here." And the worthy fellow, stooping down, brushed aside the hair from his brow. "After some few weeks in hospital, I got my discharge, and they sent me back to my wife and my plough."

"Have you got any children?"

"Three, General; two boys and a girl."

"You must make a soldier of the eldest. If he behaves well, I'll look after him. Good-bye, my man; if you need my help any time, come and see me."

Hereupon the First Consul rose, and, giving the ploughman some more louis in addition to the others, he told me to show him out. We had already reached the ante-chamber, when Napoleon recalled his visitor.

"Were you at Fleurus?"

"Yes, General."

"Can you tell me the name of your commanding officer?"

"Why, of course I can; it was General Jourdan."

"That's right. Good-bye."

And I led away the old soldier of the Republic enchanted with his reception.

CHAPTER XI

The Envoy of the Bey of Tunis and the Arab horses—England's breach of faith—Journey to Boulogne—In Flanders and Belgium—The Author becomes head-valet—His first appearance as Napoleon's barber—Constant advises his master to shave himself—His reasons for this—The first lesson—The First Consul's clumsiness—He arrives at Boulogne—Formation of a camp there—Admiral Bruix beats the English—Projected assassination of the First Consul—Rapidity of the journey—The First Consul a bad driver—Cambacérès turns pale—The Ottoman Ambassador—The Mussulman at prayers and at the play.

AT the outset of this year (1803) an envoy from Tunis came to Paris, bringing compliments from the Bey and a present to Napoleon of ten Arab horses. At that time the Bey feared England's wrath, and sought to make of France a powerful ally, well able to protect him. Nowhere could he have sought a better, since everything pointed to a rupture of the Treaty of Amiens at which all Europe had been so jubilant. England did not keep one of her promises, nor did she abide by a single one of the clauses of this said treaty.

Disgusted at such perfidy, and not wishing to be duped thereby, the First Consul publicly made ready for war, and gave orders for a fresh levy of a hundred and twenty thousand recruits. War was officially declared in the month of June, though hostilities had really commenced before that time.

At the end of this month, the First Consul visited Boulogne, going thence to Picardy, Flanders and Belgium, with a view to organising his contemplated expedition against the English, and to establishing a line of defence along the north coast. Returning to Paris in August, he went back again in November to Boulogne. Such perpetual travelling would have been too much for M. Hambart, the head-valet, who had been ailing for some time. Indeed, when Napoleon was about to start for his tour in the north, Hambart asked to be excused from accompanying him on account of his bad health.

"That's always the way with you," said the First Consul; "always ill and always grumbling! If you stop at home, who's going to shave me, pray?"

"General," replied Hambart, "Constant knows how to shave as well as I do."

Just then I was there, dressing my master. He looked at me and said, "Now then, you rogue, since you're so clever, you shall at once have an opportunity of showing your skill, and we'll see how you acquit yourself." I knew about poor Hébert's mishap (already narrated), and, not wishing the same thing to happen to myself, for some time past I had been learning how to shave, paying a barber to teach me in my leisure time. I even served my apprenticeship with him, shaving all his customers. The chins of all these good folk suffered considerably before I had got the lightness and dexterity of touch needed to apply my razor to the Imperial chin. But, by dint of repeated experiments upon plebeian cheeks, I became so deft that it inspired me with the utmost assurance. Thus, in obedience to the First Consul's order, I promptly got hot water and soap, boldly opened my razor, and set to work. As soon as the blade touched his cheek, he turned sharp round, rose, and gave me a look so keen, so searching, that I am at a loss how to describe it. Seeing that I was not at all disconcerted, he sat down again, saying, in a gentler tone, "Go on." This I did with sufficient address to satisfy him; and, when I had finished, he said, "Henceforth it is you who shall shave me." And,

indeed, from that time forward he would never have any other barber but me. My duties also became heavier now, as I had to come and shave the First Consul every day—no easy thing to do, I can assure you. During the operation he often used to talk, read the papers, twist about in his chair, and turn round suddenly. I had to take the greatest care not to cut him. Fortunately, no such accident ever occurred. If he did not happen to talk, he remained as silent and stiff as a statue, and it was impossible to get him to move his head about, or place it in a position necessary for the easier completion of my task. He had also a strange fad for only letting half his face be soaped at once. When I had shaved one side, I had to begin all over again on the other. The First Consul thought this was the more comfortable way.

Later on, when I had become his head-valet, when he condescended to show me the greatest kindness and I was as free-spoken with him as his rank allowed, I took the liberty of persuading him to try and shave himself; for, as I have said, not wishing anybody to shave him but me, he had always to wait until they had sent me word—in war-time, too, when his hour of rising was so uncertain. For a long time he refused to follow my advice. When-

ever I mentioned the subject he always replied, laughing, "Yes, yes, Mr. Lazy, I daresay you'd be very glad to get me to do half your work!" At last I was fortunate enough to convince him of my disinterestedness, and of the wisdom of my advice. The fact is, I was most anxious to persuade him to do this, for I reflected in terror that, in case illness or some other hindrance had kept me away from my master, his life would certainly have been at the mercy of the first comer. To this I am certain that he never gave a thought, for whatever they may say about his mistrustfulness, it is certain that he never took the least precaution against the traps that traitors might have set for him. Indeed, in this respect, his hardihood verged upon imprudence. Thus, all those by whom he was beloved—these being his constant attendants—sought to remedy this want of precaution by all possible vigilance and care. Needless to say, it was mere solicitude for my dear master's precious life which made me advise him to shave himself.

The first few times that he attempted to put my lessons into practice, it was a sight more disquieting than laughable. In spite of all my repeated lessons, the Emperor (for he was Emperor then) never could manage to hold his razor properly,

but, grasping it tight by the handle, he used to apply it perpendicularly, instead of slantwise, to his cheek. After one swift stroke he usually cut himself, and instantly exclaimed, "There now, you rogue, you see you've made me cut myself!" Then I used to take the razor and complete the operation. Next day the same scene would be enacted, with less bloodshed, perhaps. Each time the Emperor's skill increased, and by dint of many lessons he managed at last to do without me. Only now and again he used to cut himself, and then always playfully blamed me for such mishaps. Yet, in the way he went to work, it is only surprising that he did not hurt himself more frequently, for he always shaved downwards instead of upwards like everybody else. This bad method, which all my efforts never succeeded in changing, added to his habitual roughness in handling things, made me always quake whenever I saw him take up his razor.

Madame Bonaparte accompanied her husband on the first of these journeys. Like the visit to Lyons, it was one long series of festivals and triumphs.

At Boulogne the townsfolk had set up triumphal arches from the Porte de Montreuil to the main road leading to the barracks on the right, where the

First Consul was to reside. Each arch was composed of foliage, and displayed in large letters the names of the several battles that he had won. One arch, much larger than the rest, was erected in the middle of the Rue de l'Ecu. Here all the foremost citizens had assembled. More than a hundred young people, decked with flowers, besides children, old men and soldiers, waited impatiently for the coming of the First Consul. At his approach, repeated salvoes informed the English—whose fleet never left Boulogne waters — that Napoleon had reached the coast, where that formidable army was being got together with which he had resolved to crush England.

Dismounting his little grey horse, which was as lively as a squirrel, and accompanied by a brilliant staff, the First Consul addressed the town notables in the following fatherly fashion:

"I have come to make France's welfare sure; by all your cordial expressions and signs of gratitude I am deeply touched. I shall never forget my entry into Boulogne, a place that I have chosen as a centre of reunion for my armies. Citizens, do not be afraid of such a meeting-place: it is that of the defenders of our country; it shall soon be that of the conquerors of proud England."

Then, as the whole town flocked round him, the First Consul continued his progress, never halting until he reached his quarters, where he was received by over thirty generals. The roar of cannon, the clash of bells, and the shouts of joy did not cease until morning broke.

The day after our arrival, the First Consul visited Pont de Briques, a little village about half-a-league distant from Boulogne. A farmer there read out to him the following complimentary address:

"General, here we are, twenty fathers, and we offer you a score of big, sturdy lads, who are, and shall always be, at your service. Take them along with you, General; they will help you to give England a good thrashing. As for ourselves, we have another duty to fulfil: with our arms we will till the ground so that bread be not wanting to the brave fellows who are destined to destroy the English."

Napoleon thanked the honest yeoman with a smile, and glanced hastily at a little cottage situated at the edge of the high road. Turning to General Berthier, he said, "That is where I should like my head-quarters to be." Then, setting spurs to his horse, he rode off. A general and certain officers remained behind to carry out the First Consul's

orders, who, on the same night of his arrival at Boulogne, came back to Pont de Briques to sleep.

At Boulogne they gave me details of a naval engagement which had occurred shortly before our arrival between the French flotilla, under Admiral Bruix, and the English squadron with which Nelson had blockaded Boulogne Harbour. I give the tale such as I heard it, being vastly amused at the casual way in which the French Admiral seems to have conducted operations.

About two hundred vessels formed the line of defence; the coast and forts bristled with guns. Some of the enemy's frigates, preceded by two or three brigs, took up their position within fighting range, and the action began. Shot and shell whizzed about on every side. Nelson, bent on annihilating the flotilla, strengthened his line of battle by two other rows of vessels; placed thus in echelons, they had us at a great disadvantage. For more than seven hours the sea, wrapped in flame and smoke, presented to the Boulognese the superb and the appalling spectacle of a naval battle where more than eighteen hundred guns were being fired off at one and the same moment. Nelson's genius could do nothing against our sailors and our soldiers. Admiral Bruix had pitched his head-quarters close to the semaphore

used for signalling. There he fought Nelson, while drinking and making good cheer with his staff and sundry Boulogne ladies whom he had invited to dinner. The guests sang songs in praise of Napoleon's early victories, while the Admiral, without leaving the table, directed the flotilla's manœuvres by means of signals. Eager for victory, Nelson made all his forces advance; but, thwarted by the breeze, which was in our favour, he could not keep his promise, made in London, that he would burn the French fleet. Far from it; many of his ships sustained grievous damage, and as Admiral Bruix saw the English withdraw, he cried, "Victory!" and poured out champagne for his guests. The French fleet had suffered little, but the enemy's squadron had been devastated by the ceaseless fire from our batteries. That day, the English understood that it would be impossible for them to approach the coast of Boulogne, which they subsequently christened the "coast of iron."

When the First Consul left Boulogne, he had to pass through Abbéville, where he stopped for four-and-twenty hours. The Mayor of this town had neglected nothing necessary for according him a worthy reception. That day Abbéville looked splendid. From a neighbouring wood beautiful trees

had been dug up by the roots and planted in all the streets along which the First Consul had to pass. Some of the rich townsfolk, having splendid gardens, placed their choicest shrubs and flowers in the roadway to adorn his passage, while gorgeous carpets and rugs were laid on the ground, merely to be trampled upon by his horses. All at once an unlooked-for incident spoiled the general merriment. A courier, despatched by the Minister ot Police, suddenly arrived just as we were nearing the town. The Minister warned the First Consul that a plot was afoot for his assassination, day, hour and place being stated. To baulk the conspirators, Napoleon went through the town at a gallop, and with an escort of lancers drove to the spot marked out for the assassination. Here he halted for about half-an-hour and ate some of the Abbéville biscuits before resuming his journey. This deceived the miscreants, who had prepared to execute their fell purpose a day later.

Thus the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte went on, through Picardy, Flanders and the Netherlands. He was besieged by addresses, while the keys of cities were everywhere presented to him as if he were possessed of Royal power. Amiens, Dunkirk, Lille, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Liège and Namur

distinguished themselves by the brilliance of the reception which they accorded to the illustrious travellers. The inhabitants of the town of Antwerp presented the First Consul with six splendid bay horses. Wherever he went, indeed, he left behind him marks of usefulness. By his orders, the work of cleansing and improving the port of Amiens was begun. At Liège he gave the Prefect of the Ourthe a sum of 300,000 francs for the rebuilding of houses burned by the Austrians during the early wars of the Revolution. Antwerp owed to him her inner harbour and dockyards. At Brussels he gave orders for the Rhine to be joined to the Meuse and the Escaut by a canal. He built a stone bridge across the Meuse; and at Sedan, he gave Madame Rousseau 60,000 francs, in order to rebuild her factory which had been destroyed by fire. In short, it is impossible for me to enumerate all the public and private benefits conferred by the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte during their journey.

Soon after our return to Saint-Cloud, the First Consul, when out in the park with his wife and M. Cambacérès, took it into his head that he should like to drive the four horses harnessed to his carriage, which were the very ones presented to him by the inhabitants of Antwerp. So, getting up on the

box, he took the reins from Cæsar, the coachman. Just then they were in the alley leading to the Breteuil summer-house and Ville d'Avray. In the "Saint-Helena Memoirs" it is stated that "the aide-de-camp by riding clumsily right across the road caused the horses to bolt." But Cæsar, who gave me details of this unfortunate accident very soon after it took place, never said a word about any aide-de-camp; and, in all conscience, to upset the carriage no clumsiness was needed other than that of so inexperienced a whip as the First Consul. Then, too, the horses were young and fresh; even Cæsar had need of all his skill to drive them properly. When they no longer felt his hand, they started off at a gallop, and Cæsar, seeing how they swerved to the right, shouted out with all his might from the back, "Keep to the left!" Consul Cambacérès, looking even paler than usual, was at little pains to allay Madame Bonaparte's fears, but roared out, "Stop! Stop! You'll smash us up!" That was but too probable, but the First Consul paid no heed, for, as a matter of fact, the horses were already beyond his control. Whirled along at a frantic pace, they reached the iron gates, but, not being able to keep in the middle, the carriage dashed against a milestone and was upset. Luckily, the horses stopped. The First Consul was thrown some ten feet forward

upon his stomach. He fainted, and had to be lifted up before regaining consciousness. Madame Bonaparte and Cambacérès were only somewhat bruised; poor Josephine, however, was in a dreadful fright about her husband. Yet, though he had had a nasty shaking, he would not be bled, but only let himself be rubbed with eau-de-Cologne, his favourite remedy. That night, when going to bed, he joked about his mishap, gaily alluded to his colleague's abject terror, and said, "One must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Let him keep his whip; everybody to their trade!" Despite such pleasantry, he admitted that he had never felt so near death before, and that for a few seconds it really seemed to him as though he were dead. I cannot rightly remember if it was on this occasion that he remarked that "death was but a dreamless sleep."

In the month of October of this year, the First Consul received, in public audience, Haled Effendi, Ambassador of the Porte at the Tuileries. The Turkish Ambassador's arrival created quite a sensation, perhaps because he was the bearer of a quantity of costly cashmere as a gift to the First Consul. All this stuff would have to be distributed, and each Court lady flattered herself that she would be handsomely treated. In his foreign attire, and,

above all, if devoid of his cashmere, I do not think he would have made much impression upon persons used to seeing sovereign princes pay homage to the head of the Government either at home or abroad. Nor was his costume more notable than that of Roustan, to which one was accustomed; while as for his bows and obeisances, they were no whit more profound than those of the courtiers usually in attendance. In Paris, the sensation is said to have lasted longer. "How droll it is to be a Turk!" Certain ladies had the honour of seeing this bearded Ambassador at his meals; he was polite, even gallant, towards them, and made them sundry presents, which were much vaunted. His manners were not ultra-Turkish, nor did it shock him to see the faces of our fair Parisiennes without a veil. One day, when he was at Saint-Cloud, I saw him at his prayers. It was in the Court of Honour, on a large parapet with a stone balcony. The Ambassador had carpets put down, taken from those apartments afterwards occupied by the King of Rome, and on these he went through his process of genuflexion before several of the servants, who discreetly kept out of sight behind the window-blinds. That evening he went to the play. They gave *Zaïre*, I think, or else *Mahomet;* to him it was all incomprehensible.

CHAPTER XII

Another journey to Boulogne—Visit to the fleet and review of troops—The line's jealousy of the horse-guards—The First Consul in camp—His anger with the men—Boredom of the officers and pleasures of camp-life—Timidity of the Boulognese—Jealousy of the married men—Fair visitors in camp—Generals Soult, Saint-Hilaire and Andréossy—The First Consul mistaken for a war commissioner—General Bertrand—Arcambal and the two visitors—The First Consul as a spy—Naval combat—An error of generalship—Fight between two Picards—Dinner to the sound of cannon—The English frigate dismasted and the brig sunk.

In the following November, the First Consul returned to Boulogne to visit the fleet and review the troops. Whenever he held such reviews, the First Consul always seemed anxious to excite the enthusiasm of the men and their attachment to his person by always flattering their self-respect. One day, having specially noticed the excellent bearing of the 36th and 57th Regiments of the Line, and the 10th Light Infantry, he made all the officers step forward from corporal to colonel, and, addressing them, expressed his satisfaction, remind-

ing them of bygone occasions when, under fire, he had similarly complimented them.

Such flattering marks of distinction roused no envy among the other line regiments, who all came in for some share of praise; and when the review was over all returned quietly to their quarters. But the soldiers of the 36th, 57th and 10th, proud at such special recognition, went that afternoon to celebrate their triumph in a tavern usually frequented by the horse-guards. Here they began drinking, peaceably enough at first, while talking of the campaigns won and towns captured by the First Consul from earliest times until the review of that morning. Then, as it seems, certain young fellows from Boulogne, who had joined the topers, started singing some newly-made verses extolling the valiant exploits of the said regiments, without a word about the rest of the army, nor the slightest allusion to the guards—though these couplets, be it remembered, were sung in a tavern specially patronised by the grenadiers of the guard! The latter at first maintained a sulky silence until, being exasperated, they loudly protested against the said couplets as offensive and detestable. There was soon a very pretty row, much shouting, and not a little strong language. Then they separated, ap-

pointing a meeting at four o'clock the next morning on the outskirts of Marquise, a little village about two leagues from Boulogne. It was already very late before the soldiers left the inn.

More than two hundred of the guards went one by one to the place of meeting, to find that a like number of their adversaries from the 36th, 57th and 10th Regiments were already on the spot. Then quietly, and without further parley, they drew their sabres and fought for over an hour in the most appallingly cold-blooded manner. One of the grenadiers named Martin, a fellow of gigantic proportions, killed seven or eight men of the 10th Regiment with his own hand. They would probably have all been massacred if General Saint-Hilaire—informed, when too late, of this bloody fray—had not instantly despatched a regiment of cavalry to the spot, and this put an end to the combat. The grenadiers had lost ten men and the linesmen thirteen, while there were many wounded on both sides.

Next day the First Consul went into camp, and the instigators of this terrible affair were duly brought before him, when he thus addressed them:

"I know why you fought. Several brave fellows have thus perished in a combat unworthy of you and of them. You will be punished. I have ordered

the couplets that occasioned all the mischief to be printed. And, on learning what your punishment is, I should like the Boulognese to know that you have forfeited the esteem of your companions-in-arms."

Before long, the troops, and particularly the officers, began to be thoroughly bored with Boulogne, a town less fitted, perhaps, than any other to make a life of inactivity supportable. Yet there was no grumbling; for where the First Consul was, murmuring never took place. Nevertheless, everyone chafed inwardly at being kept in camp and harbour while England lay in front of one, not more than nine or ten leagues ahead. Amusements in Boulogne were few and far between. The Boulogne ladies—pretty, most of them, but extremely shy—dared not give parties at their own houses, fearing to offend their husbands, who, like all the Picard folk, were horribly jealous. However, there was a handsome assembly-room, where balls and *soirées* could easily have been given. Yet, though they would have liked to have done so, these ladies were afraid of using it, and, at last, some of the fair Parisiennes, pitying the dreary lot of all these brave, good-looking officers, had to come out to Boulogne and dispel the boredom begotten of such long wait-

ing. The example of the gay Parisiennes nettled the fair dames of Abbéville, Dunkirk and Amiens. They one and all followed suit, and Boulogne was soon full of fascinating strangers, all ready to do the honours of the place.

Of all these ladies, the one most remarkable for her charming manners, wit and beauty, was Madame F., from Dunkirk. She was an excellent musician, the very embodiment of gaiety, youth and grace, so no wonder if she turned everybody's head. Colonel Joseph Bonaparte, the First Consul's brother, Generals Soult, Saint-Hilaire and Andréossy, besides other persons of note, were among her adorers. Only two of these, so they say, succeeded in their suit; of these, one was Colonel Joseph, who ere long was looked upon as Madame F.'s favoured lover. She often gave *soirées*, at which Colonel Joseph was always present. Of all his rivals, the only one who bore him a grudge was General Soult. Such rivalry in no way injured Madame F.'s interests. Like a clever tactician, she adroitly stimulated the jealousy of her two admirers, accepting from each in turn compliments, bouquets of roses, and occasionally something nicer still.

Hearing of his brother's amours, the First Consul one evening took it into his head to have some

fun at Madame F.'s. Her apartment was merely a small one on the first floor, over a carpenter's shop in the Rue des Minimes. In order to avoid recognition, the First Consul dressed himself like a civilian, putting on spectacles and a wig. He took General Bertrand into his confidence, at that period already a great favourite, who did his best to make him unrecognisable.

Thus disguised, the First Consul and his companion went to Madame F.'s, where they asked for M. Arcambal. Upon him the First Consul imposed the strictest secrecy, as his incognito must be at all cost rigidly maintained. This M. Arcambal readily promised, and the two visitors were accordingly announced as "commissioners of war."

The party was busy playing loo, and gold pieces were strewn over the tables. By the excitement of play, and the fumes of punch, all were so absorbed that no one noticed the entrance of the new-comers. As for their hostess, she had never met the First Consul or General Bertrand face to face, so from her there was nothing to fear. I fancy that Colonel Joseph recognised his brother, but he did not appear to do so.

Avoiding scrutiny as much as possible, the First Consul watched his brother and Madame F.

When thoroughly convinced of their intimacy, he was about to quit the *salon*, when his fair hostess, anxious that the number of her guests should not decrease, hurried up to the two sham commissioners of war, and gracefully begged them to stay. They were going to play some round games, she said, and they must not go till they had paid their forfeits. Consulting General Bertrand with a glance, the First Consul decided to stop a little longer and play at such truly *innocent games*.

Then, in a few minutes, at Madame F.'s request, the gamesters left their loo and took seats in a circle round her. First of all they danced, and then the "innocent games" began. When it was the First Consul's turn to pay a forfeit he at first became greatly embarrassed, as he had nothing about him but a piece of paper upon which he had jotted down the names of certain colonels. This paper, however, he gave to Madame F., begging her not to open it. His wish was granted, and, until the forfeit had been redeemed, it lay intact upon the fair lady's lap. The moment for such recovery having come, upon our illustrious General the strange penance was imposed of keeping guard at the door, while Madame F. and Colonel Joseph went for "a voyage to Cythera"

in an adjoining room. The First Consul performed his duties with a very good grace, and then, as the forfeits were restored, he made a sign to General Bertrand, and they both took their leave. Shortly afterwards, the carpenter on the ground-floor brought up a note to Madame F., the contents of which were as follows:

"My best thanks to you, madam, for your charming reception. If ever you come to my quarters, I will mount guard again at the door, if you like; but, on that occasion, I shall not allow anyone but myself to be your companion in 'a voyage to Cythera.'

"(Signed) BONAPARTE."

The fair dame furtively read the note, but was not slow to inform her associates that they had received a visit from Napoleon, much to their amazement.

An incident of Napoleon's bravery while at Boulogne also merits mention. A fierce conflict ensued outside Boulogne Harbour, when the English sought to prevent the entry of about thirty vessels from Ostend, Dunkirk and Nieuport bringing ammunition for our navy.

A splendid frigate, a cutter and a brig left the English squadron and sought to block the passage of these Batavian ships; but they met with so lively a reception that they felt no special desire to repeat the experiment.

The port of Boulogne was defended by five forts —Fort de la Crèche, Fort en Blois, Fort Musoir, Fort Croï and Fort d'Ordre—all well supplied with guns and howitzers. The ships moored in line to barricade the entry included two hundred and fifty war-sloops, besides other vessels. Some of the Imperial gun-boats formed part of these.

The fight began about one o'clock in the afternoon. The weather was splendid. At the sound of the first shot, Napoleon left his head-quarters at Pont de Briques, and, with his staff, rode forward to Admiral Bruix, to give him certain instructions. Then, wishing to keep an eye upon the movements of the defence and to help to direct these, accompanied by the Admiral and certain officers, he got into a small boat rowed by some of the marines of the guard. Thus it was that the First Consul ventured into the very midst of all the ships moored in line, courting a thousand dangers and a perfect hail-storm of shot and shell. Intending to land at Wimereux after passing along the line, he steered towards Fort Croï, saying that they must pass in front of it. Admiral Bruix, terrified at the peril of so needless and imprudent a manœuvre, urged him to desist. "What shall we gain," said he, "by doubling the fort? Nothing, except bullets!

General, if we go in at the back we shall get there just as soon." But this opinion was not shared by the First Consul, who obstinately desired to double the fort, until, at the risk of degradation, the Admiral gave contrary orders to the sailors, and the First Consul was thus obliged to pass behind the fort, much vexed with the Admiral and loading him with reproaches. These, however, soon ceased, for hardly had their boat passed than a transport-vessel which had doubled Fort Croï was blown to pieces by three or four bomb-shells.

Seeing how correct had been the Admiral's surmise, Napoleon remained silent, and the rest of the crossing occurred without further incident until they reached the little port of Wimereux. On landing, he climbed up the cliffs in order to encourage the gunners. He spoke to all of them, patted them on the back and begged them to aim straight.

"Cheer up, my friends," said he; "remember that you're fighting fellows who will hold out for ever so long; you must dismiss them with all the honours of war!" Noticing the stubborn and dignified resistance offered by the English frigate, he asked:

"I say, my boys, do you believe that her captain is an Englishman? I don't."

Stirred to enthusiasm by his words, the gunners redoubled their zeal and alacrity.

"See here, General," cried one of them, "watch me knock her bowsprit off!" He was right; the ball cut her bowsprit clean in two.

"Let that plucky fellow have twenty francs," cried Napoleon to one of his staff.

Near the Wimereux batteries there was a smithy for making the bullets red-hot. The First Consul watched the smiths at work, and from time to time kept giving them advice. "That's not red enough, my lads; you must let them have something redder than that. Now then! now then!" One of the men who had known him when still a lieutenant of artillery remarked to his comrades, "He knows all about such little matters, just as he does about big ones—blessed if he doesn't!"

An amusing quarrel took place between two soldiers who were watching the fight from the cliffs. They were both natives of Picardy.

"I say," quoth one, "d'ye see the Little Corporal?"

"No, that I don't."

"Why, can't you see him in that boat yonder?"

"Ah, yes, so I do; but what can he be thinking about? If he should get hit, the whole army would weep for him! Why is he exposing himself like that?"

"Bless me, why, that's his proper place, of course."

"No, it isn't!"

"Yes, it is!"

"No, it isn't!"

"Look here, how about you, if the Little Corporal gets killed?"

"'Tis his proper place, I tell you."

Here further argument failed them, and, as it appears, they fell to blows. Indeed, there was some trouble to separate them.

The naval battle began at one o'clock in the afternoon; about ten o'clock that night the Batavian flotilla entered harbour under the most fearful fire that ever I saw. The hideous din from the forts was echoed with deafening precision by the cliffs. Bombs fell in all directions; yet, strange to say, no one in the town seemed at all afraid. The Boulogne folk had become used to danger; every day they expected something terrible to happen; preparations for attack or defence were ever before their eyes; mere looking-on at the war-game had turned them into soldiers. That day everyone dined to the tune the cannon played, enjoying his meal no whit the less for all the racket, nor was the hour changed by so much as a minute. Men went about their business; women attended to

household matters, while their daughters practised scales as usual. They heard the bullets whizzing overhead with perfect indifference; and, seemingly, those curious ones who came out upon the cliffs to watch the fight were no more moved by the spectacle than if they had been looking on at some grand bellicose display at Franconi's.

To me it is still a puzzle how three vessels could stand such a furious onslaught for over nine hours. At the moment that the flotilla entered the harbour, the English cutter went to the bottom, while the brig had been set on fire by red-hot cannon-balls. Only the frigate, with shattered masts and torn sails, remained. Yet there she lay, firm, immovable as a rock. So near was she to our ships that her seamen were recognisable, and could be counted. A good way off in her rear there were more than a hundred English vessels. At last, when it was past ten o'clock, a signal from the British Admiral caused the frigate to put about; and the firing ceased. Our line got little damage during this long and terrible encounter, for the frigate's broadsides were nearly always levelled at the rigging, hardly ever at the hulls of our sloops. The brig and the cutter did us more harm.

CHAPTER XIII

The First Consul returns to Paris—Arrival of Prince Camille Borghèse—Pauline Bonaparte and her first husband—Departure for Saint-Domingo—Insurrection of the blacks—Revolt of 12,000 negroes—Madame Leclerc's courage—Pauline saves her son—Death of General Leclerc—She marries again—M. Jules de Canouville and the Princess Borghèse—The Princess incurs the Emperor's displeasure—Her generosity towards him—Her only remaining friend—The Princess's diamonds.

THE First Consul left Boulogne for Paris in order to attend the wedding of one of his sisters. Prince Camille Borghèse, who belonged to one of the oldest Roman families, had already arrived in the capital. He was going to marry Madame Pauline Bonaparte, widow of General Leclerc, who died at Saint-Domingo of yellow fever. I remember seeing this unfortunate General at the First Consul's, shortly before the luckless expedition which cost him his life and France so many brave men and such enormous sums of money. Though to-day his name is well-nigh forgotten, if not actually held in contempt, General Leclerc was a man of gentle, kindly nature. He was passionately fond of his wife,

whose frivolity—to use no stronger word—distressed him greatly, inducing a deep, habitual melancholy quite painful to witness. Pauline, however, had married him of her own free will, yet that did not prevent her from always teasing him in a thousand capricious ways, while for ever declaring that he might think himself precious lucky to have the First Consul's sister as a wife.

When the General went to Saint-Domingo, Napoleon insisted upon his wife going with him. She had no other alternative but to obey and leave Paris, where the sceptre of fashion had been hers to wield, and where, by her elegance and coquetry, no less than by her incomparable beauty, she had eclipsed all other women. Now she had to face a most dangerous climate and the ferocious allies of Christophe and Dessalines. At the close of the year 1801, the flagship *Ocean* left Brest for the Cape with General Leclerc and his wife and son on board.

On reaching the Cape, Madame Leclerc's courageous conduct was beyond all praise. On more than one occasion, but notably on that which I am about to describe, she showed heroism worthy of her name and of her husband's rank. The details anent this I got from an eye-witness whom I knew

in Paris when he was in the Princess Pauline's service.

When, in September, 1802, there was the great revolt of the blacks, the gangs led by Christophe and Dessalines—they included over 12,000 negroes—attacked Cape Town, which was only defended by 1,000 troops. They were all that remained of the vast army that left Brest a year previously, brilliantly equipped and full of hope. This mere handful of men—most of them sapped by fever, with General Leclerc at their head, who himself was suffering from the disease that slew him—managed to repulse the repeated onslaughts of the blacks with dauntless, with heroic courage.

Madame Leclerc, with her son, was under the protection of a devoted friend, in the house where her husband resided at the foot of the hills that line the coast. The General gave orders for his wife and son to be transferred to the French fleet. But to this Pauline would not consent. Some of the town ladies, who had fled to her for safety and entreated her to escape, gave her most appalling descriptions of the shocking way in which white women were treated by the negroes. To these her answer was, "You may go, if you like. You are not sisters of a Bonaparte."

Yet the peril grew ever greater from moment to moment, and General Leclerc sent an aide-de-camp with instructions to remove Pauline by force if she again refused to go. The officer was reluctantly compelled to execute this order. Madame Leclerc was held down in a chair by four soldiers, while another grenadier walked beside her, carrying her son, who, worthy of so intrepid a mother, played all the while with the soldier's plume. A band of tearful, trembling females brought up the rear; and in such wise was Pauline transported to the beach. But just as they were about to embark, another aide-de-camp brought news of the rout of the blacks. "There, you see!" she cried, returning homewards, "I knew I was right in not wishing to go on board ship." However, she was not yet out of danger. Some of the negroes belonging to the army that in such miraculous fashion had been repulsed, fell in with Madame Leclerc's feeble escort. They made as though they were going to attack the fugitives, and by constant firing had to be kept at bay. While such skirmishing lasted, Pauline never for a moment lost her imperturbable coolness and presence of mind. All this was afterwards told to the First Consul, and he felt proud at having such a brave sister. In-

deed, I believe he said one day to Prince Borghèse, "Pauline was fated to marry a Roman, being wholly Roman herself from head to foot."

Unfortunately, courage such as this, which many men envy, was in her case not joined to other virtues less brilliant and more modest, yet also far more requisite for a woman—qualities more to be expected of her than pluck and contempt of danger.

I do not know if, as has been stated elsewhere, Madame Leclerc, when obliged to leave Paris for Saint-Domingo, was in love with an actor of the Théâtre Français. Nor can I vouch for the accuracy of the story about Mademoiselle Duchesnois, who naïvely exclaimed before everybody, "Why, Lafon will be inconsolable; very likely he'll die of grief!" Yet, from what I know of the Princess's little follies, I am inclined to believe that the tale is true.

All Paris knew of the special favour which she accorded to M. Jules de Canouville, a handsome dashing young colonel. Brave, shapely and well-built, he had a way with women that was perfectly irresistible, though in some of his flirtations he was far from discreet. Of all his intrigues, that with the Princess Pauline proved the deepest and most enduring. Unfortunately, neither showed proper reticence, and their love-affair soon became a public scandal.

Later on, I shall have occasion to narrate the adventure which brought about the disgrace, banishment, and, possibly, the death of Colonel de Canouville—an untimely event, deplored by the whole army, since it was not by the enemy's bullet that he was killed. Nevertheless, however weak the Princess Pauline may have been in respect to her lovers, and though most incredible stories could be quoted that all had their basis on stern fact, her praiseworthy devotion to the Emperor, in 1814, should serve to make one lenient in judging such faults.

Many a time her flighty behaviour, and notably her want of respect for the Empress Marie Louise, provoked Napoleon greatly. But he always forgave her in the end. At the time of his fall, however, she happened to be in disgrace. Being informed that the island of Elba was his prison-house, she hastened thither to share his confinement, leaving Rome and Italy, where she owned several splendid palaces. Again, before Waterloo, Napoleon had another proof of his sister's loyalty. Fearing that he might need money, she sent him her most costly *parures* of diamonds, the value of which was enormous. They were found in the Emperor's carriage when captured at Waterloo. This was subsequently exhibited to the curious in London; but, for their rightful owner, at least, the diamonds were lost.

CHAPTER XIV

Arrest of General Moreau—His marriage to Mademoiselle Hulot—His mother-in-law—Sarcasm and intrigues—His arrest—The Emperor inflexible—The Besançon deputies—Friends of the Court—Solemn audience at the Tuileries—Reception of the Bisontins—Courageous answer—Old comrades—The Portuguese Commander-in-Chief—The Emperor's surveillance of his household—The Keeper of the Portfolio—The Emperor jealous at seeing the name of a suspect.

THE day of General Moreau's arrest, the First Consul was in a state of great agitation. The morning was spent in sending emissaries and police-agents hither and thither. Arrangements had been made so that the arrest should be effected exactly at the time appointed, either at Gros-Bois, or at the General's residence in the Rue Faubourg-Saint-Honoré. The First Consul paced restlessly up and down his room. He sent for me, and ordered me to go to General Moreau's Paris house, and see if the arrest had been made, and if there was any disturbance. I was immediately to return and report matters. I obeyed; but I could not see anything extraordinary going on—merely a few policemen keeping an eye on the house, ready to pounce on their

prey. I might have been noticed, so I hastened back to the château; and on the way I heard that General Moreau had been arrested while returning to Paris from Gros-Bois, the estate which a few months later he sold to Marshal Berthier before going to America. I hurried home to let the First Consul know my news. But he had already been informed of the arrest, and made me no answer, looking pensive and moody, just as he had been all the morning.

As I find myself talking of General Moreau, I may as well recall the fatal circumstances which led to the tarnishing of his glory. Madame Bonaparte had found him a bride in Mademoiselle Hulot, an old friend, and, like herself, a creole from the Isle of France. Gentle, amiable, and possessed of all those qualities which go to the making of a good wife and a good mother, Madame Moreau was passionately fond of her husband and proud to own his glorious name. But, unfortunately, she showed great deference to her mother, a woman who was intensely ambitious, and desired nothing less than to see her daughter seated upon a throne. Her powerful influence over Madame Moreau was soon brought to bear upon the General also. Dominated by her counsels, he grew gloomy and melancholic,

losing, once and for all, the light-heartedness which distinguished him. Henceforth the General's house was the hot-bed of plottings and intrigues—a place of resort for all malcontents, and their number was considerable. From this time forward the General made a point of disapproving of all the First Consul's measures, being opposed to the re-establishment of religion, and ridiculing the institution of the Legion of Honour as if it were some absurd piece of mummery. As may well be supposed, reports of such grave misdemeanours, and of many others, ere long reached the ears of the First Consul, who at first refused to believe them; but how could he possibly turn a deaf ear to his informants when every day fresh tales were brought to him, many of them exaggerated by poisonous, malevolent tongues?

I myself witnessed more than one mark of affection shown to General Moreau by the First Consul. When the former was once visiting Napoleon at the Tuileries, General Carnot came in with a pair of pistols of exquisite and costly workmanship, which certain Versailles manufacturers desired to offer to the First Consul as a present. To take up these handsome weapons, admire them for an instant, and then present them to General Moreau, with

the remark, "There, they've just come at the right moment!"—all this occurred far quicker than it takes me to chronicle it. By such a sign of friendship the General was highly flattered, and heartily thanked Napoleon for his generous gift.

The trial of General Moreau puts me in mind of the story of a brave officer who was mixed up in this unfortunate affair, and only cleared himself, after a long period of disgrace, by braving the Emperor's displeasure.

When General Moreau fell, all those officers appertaining to his suite were disgraced also. His aides-de-camp were placed under arrest, even those who were not in Paris at the time. One of these, Colonel Delélée, had for some months been away at Besançon on leave, resting, after all his battles, in the bosom of his family, with the young wife to whom he was but recently married. On pleasure bent, and pleasure only, he gave but scant heed to politics, while of conspiracies he knew nothing whatever. Brother-in-arms and comrade of Colonels Guilleminot, Hugo,[1] and Foy[2]—all of whom afterwards became generals—he spent many a merry

1 Father of M. Victor Hugo, who is himself godson of Madame Delélée.

2 The illustrious General Foy.

evening with them, either at the barracks or in their own homes. All at once Colonel Delélée is arrested, thrust into a post-chaise, and only when going at full gallop to Paris does he learn, from the officer of gendarmes escorting him, that General Moreau has been charged with conspiracy, and that he, as the General's aide-de-camp, counts as one of the conspirators.

On reaching Paris, the Colonel is secretly imprisoned. His wife, in alarm, follows close on his track, but only after long delay is she allowed to communicate with the prisoner, and this only by signs, she stopping for a moment or two in the prison court-yard, while he hurriedly shows himself at a window and puts out his hand to her through the iron bars.

Such severe regulations, however, are modified with regard to the Colonel's son, a child of three or four. His father is allowed to embrace him, and is brought every day to the prison by his mother. The pitiless turnkey looks on, while the boy plays his part in finished style. He pretends to be lame, and that there is gravel in his shoe which hurts him. Turning his back upon the jailer, the Colonel takes the boy upon his knee to rid him of the annoyance, and in the shoe finds a note from his wife apprising him

of the course of the trial, and telling him what he has to hope or to fear.

At last, after several months of captivity, the sentence being adverse to all those implicated, Colonel Delélée, against whom no charge whatever had even been made, was not only not acquitted, as he deserved to be, but was struck off the Army List, and arbitrarily placed under police supervision, while forbidden to come within forty leagues of Paris. Moreover, at first, he was not allowed to return to Besançon, and it was only a year after his release from prison that he obtained such permission.

Young and full of courage, the Colonel in his solitary retreat looks on remorsefully, while his comrades make their way in the world and take honoured and glorious places in it. He sees himself doomed to a life of inaction, of obscurity. Countless are the petitions that he presents to the Emperor for permission to serve as a common soldier, and, with knapsack on back, rejoin his old comrades. But he gets no reply. The Emperor's will is unbending, and to each fresh appeal he says, "Let him wait awhile."

The inhabitants of Besançon, who look upon the colonel as their compatriot, take keen interest in the undeserved misfortunes of this brave officer.

A chance occurs to recommend him to the Emperor's clemency, or, rather, to appeal to his sense of justice. By this they profit.

It was, I think, after the troops returned from the Prussian and Polish campaigns. From every part of France deputations arrived to congratulate the Emperor upon his recent victories. Colonel Delélée was unanimously elected a member of the Doubs deputation, which included the Mayor and the Prefect of Besançon. On reaching Paris, they pay the usual formal visits to the different Ministers. The Minister of Police, taking the president of the deputation (Marshal M.) aside, asks him how it is that among their number there is a man publicly known to be in disgrace and whose presence could not but prove distasteful to the Emperor.

Pale and agitated, the Marshal hastens to Colonel Delélée.

"My friend," he cries, "all is lost! All the officials, I can see, are dead against you; and if the Emperor sees you with us, he will take it as an overt intention of disobeying his commands, and will be furious."

"Well, how can I help that?"

"Well, perhaps you had better——"

"Better what?"

"Well, possibly if you were to retire——"

Here the Colonel broke in impetuously.

"Allow me, Marshal, to say that I cannot follow such advice as this. I have not come all this way merely to shrink back, like a baby, at the first obstacle. I am tired of disgrace that I never deserved, and wearier still of my stagnant, lazy life. Whether the Emperor is vexed or not, see me he shall; he can have me shot if he likes, for I have no wish to go on living as I have done for the last four years. However, I am willing to abide by the decision of my colleagues, the other deputies from Besançon."

These did not disapprove of his resolution, and accordingly, at the proper time, they were received in audience at the Tuileries, together with other deputations from all parts of the Empire.

His Majesty walked through the saloon, addressing the president of each deputation, to whom he said a few flattering words. Coming to the Doubs deputation, he spoke to the brave Marshal who was its president, and was moving on when he caught sight of Delélée and stopped short in surprise.

"Who are you?"

"Sire, I am Colonel Delélée, formerly first aide-de-camp to General Moreau."

"What have you come here for?"

"To ask for that for which I have asked for years, viz., that Your Majesty would tell me of what I am guilty, or else reinstate me to my former rank."

The Emperor's tightly-drawn lips relaxed. He smiled. Putting his forefinger to his mouth, he approached the Colonel and said, in a gentle, almost a friendly way:

"Yes, there's been some complaint with regard to that, but we won't say any more about it."

Then he passed on, but soon came back again, and, stopping before the Colonel, said to the Minister of War, "Be good enough, sir, to take note of this officer's name and to remind me of it without fail. He is bored at remaining idle. We will find him something to do."

Two days afterwards, Colonel Delélée received a staff appointment in the Portugal army, commanded by the Duke d'Abrantès. His equipments were soon ready, and he had a final audience of the Emperor, who said:

"Colonel, I know it is needless to ask you to make up for lost time. Ere long, I trust, we shall both be mutually satisfied with one another."

Crossing the Pyrenees, the Colonel went through

Spain, where Junot received him with open arms. The Portugal army had had much to suffer during the two years that, unequally matched as it was, it had fought against the natives and the English. Rations were scanty and irregular, while the men were badly clothed and badly shod. Colonel Delélée did all that was possible to make matters better, and the soldiers had just begun to recognise his worth when over-work brought on an illness which proved fatal, and he died before being able, in the Emperor's words, to "make up for lost time."

Elsewhere I stated that whenever any plot against the First Consul's life was discovered, all the members of his household were subjected to strict surveillance. Their slightest actions were closely watched; on leaving the château they were followed; every petty detail of their life was noted and made public. Nor was it merely those who were in the First Consul's service that had to submit to such surveillance. Directly he became Emperor, all the palace porters kept a register with the names of every visitor, who had to inscribe his name in it, and also that of the person whom he had come to see. Every evening this register was handed to the Grand Marshal of the Palace, or, in his absence, to the Governor; and the Emperor

often looked through it himself. Once he caught sight, on the list, of a certain name to which, for marital reasons, he was justified in taking exception. His Majesty had already ordered the said person to withdraw, and seeing, as he thought, his name figure in the porter's book, he was extremely annoyed, believing this to be a double piece of bravado. Enquiries were instantly made, when it transpired that the visitor in question was a person of no importance, whose only fault was the possession of a name to which, justly enough, grave stigma attached.

CHAPTER XV

The First Consul's awaking on March 21st, 1804—Josephine's distress—News of the death of the Duke d'Enghien—The First Consul becomes Emperor—Cambacérès the first to address him as "Sire"—Excitement at the château—The French Princes—M. Lucien and Madame Jouberton—The Imperial Marshals—Clumsiness of the first courtiers—The Emperor's contempt for anniversaries of the Revolution—Departure for Boulogne—The only leave of absence ever granted to me by the Emperor—The Emperor's habits—"Teach them how to make tea"—M. de Bourienne's Memoirs—Mania for little slaps on the face—The Emperor and his stud-groom—A cheque for a blow.

GLORIOUS as was the year 1804 for the Emperor, with the exception of 1814 and 1815, it was also the year which brought him most trouble. It is not for me to judge of such grave events, nor to enquire what side the Emperor took, nor who were his confederates and his advisers. It behoves me (indeed, I cannot do otherwise) to narrate simply what I saw and what I heard. On March 21st of this same year, I went to call the First Consul at an early hour. I found him awake, his elbow resting on the pillow, looking

utterly worn out. Seeing me come in, he sat up, passed his hand repeatedly across his brow and said, "Constant, I have got a headache." Then, tossing off the coverlet, he added, "I've had a bad night." He seemed to have something that weighed upon his mind, and looked so miserable that I felt quite surprised and grieved. While I was dressing him, he never uttered a word; he was never mute like this unless something had upset him. Only Roustan and myself were in the room at the time. When his toilette was finished, and while I was giving him his snuff-box, handkerchief and little bonbon-box, the door suddenly opened and his wife appeared, all dishevelled and in tears. Both Roustan and I were greatly astonished and even alarmed, since it must have been something very unusual to bring Madame Bonaparte out of her room in such *déshabillé* as that. Rushing in, she exclaimed, "The Duke d'Enghien is dead! Oh, dearest, what have you done?" Then she fell, sobbing, into the First Consul's arms. He grew deadly pale as, greatly moved, he muttered, "The unfortunate fellows have done their work too quickly." Then he went out, supporting Madame Bonaparte, who could hardly walk and continued to weep. At the news of the Duke's death all the château

were in consternation. The First Consul noticed such general sadness, yet forebore to reproach anyone for this. It was that we feared that so shocking a catastrophe might serve to dim his glory and even bring harm to our beloved master. No doubt he could read our real feelings. Anyway, that is all that I know regarding this deplorable incident; I do not pretend to say what passed between Josephine and her husband in the inner room. The First Consul's emotion seemed to be perfectly genuine—not in the least simulated. For some days he was sad and silent, never uttering more than a word or two at dressing-time.

During that month and the next, I noticed perpetual comings and goings, divers persons having frequent interviews with the First Consul—members of the State Council, tribunes, and senators. For long past, the army and most of the citizens, who idolized the hero of Italy and Egypt, openly expressed their desire that he should bear a title worthy of his renown and of the grandeur of France. Moreover, they were well aware that it was he, in the State, who did all, and that his pretended colleagues were in reality his inferiors. Thus it seemed only right that in name he should stand supreme, since, indeed, he already did this. After his down-

fall, I often heard the Emperor called a usurper, at which I could never do more than smile, pityingly. If the Emperor usurped the throne, his accomplices were more numerous than those of all the tyrants of tragedy and melodrama combined, seeing that three-fourths of the French people were a party to the plot. It was on the 18th of May that the Empire was proclaimed, and that the First Consul (whom henceforth I shall call the Emperor) received the Senate at Saint-Cloud, presided over by Cambacérès, who was afterwards made Imperial Chancellor. It was he who first addressed the Emperor as "Sire." At the conclusion of this audience, the Senate proceeded to pay its vows of homage to the Empress Josephine. The rest of the day was given up to receptions and congratulatory interviews. At the castle, everyone was wild with joy, each imagining that he had been suddenly promoted to a higher post. There was general embracing and shaking of hands, and many were the plans laid for the future. Not the least underling but was touched with the fire of ambition; in a word, save the difference of rank, the servants' hall was an exact replica of the drawing-room.

Nothing was more amusing than to see how embarrassed all the servants were when answering

His Majesty. Beginning by a blunder, in correcting this they made a worse one, perpetually repeating "Sire," "General," "Your Majesty," "Citizen First Consul." Next morning, on going into the Emperor's room as usual, in reply to his questions, "What time is it?" "What sort of weather is it?" I said, "It is seven o'clock, *Sire*, and fine weather." When I approached the bed he caught hold of my ear and pulled it, slapped me on the cheek, and called me "a droll fellow"—his favourite name for me whenever he was particularly pleased with my services. The night before, His Majesty had sat up working late, yet, though grave and preoccupied, he looked contented. What a different awaking was this from that of the 21st of March!

The same day His Majesty held his first grand levee at the Tuileries, when all the civil and military authorities were formally presented to him. The Emperor's brothers and sisters were made Princes and Princesses, with the exception of M. Lucien, who, since his marriage with Madame Jouberton, was not on good terms with the Emperor. Eighteen generals were raised to the dignity of Marshals of the Empire. From the very first day everything about Their Majesties took on a courtly and a regal air. Much has been said regarding the uncouth

ways of their first courtiers, little used as these were to their new duties and to all that etiquette exacts. Yet in this matter there was gross exaggeration, just as in everything else. Of course, at the outset, there was embarrassment among them, just as there was among the servants of the Imperial household. Yet this lasted but a short while, and the chamberlains and other exalted officials soon got used to things as quickly as the valets did. Moreover, quite a gang of people who had belonged to the old Court proffered instruction in correct deportment, and, with their wives, eagerly sought permission to train the budding courtiers in the graceful and decorous discharge of their tasks.

His Majesty was not fond of Republican festivals and anniversaries, considering some odious and bloodthirsty, and others ridiculous. I noticed how indignant he was that an annual festival should have been made of the 21st of January, while he smiled pityingly at what he called the "masquerades" of the theophilanthropists, who, as he declared, "would have nothing to do with Jesus Christ, but made saints of Fénelon and Las-Casas, Catholic priests."

On the 18th of July, the Emperor left Saint-Cloud for the camp at Boulogne, and it was then that I asked him for a week's holiday in order to

go and see my parents. This was readily granted, and I lost no time in setting out for Perueltz. But what was my astonishment, the day after my arrival, to receive a letter by courier, from Count de Rémusat, ordering me to rejoin the Emperor at once, adding that His Majesty had need of my services, and that I must get back just as soon as possible. Though such news was a disappointment, I, at any rate, felt flattered at being so necessary to the great man who had deigned to take me into his employ; and I hastily bade my relatives good-bye. His Majesty, on reaching Boulogne, had at once set out on a short excursion through the Northern départments. I got to Boulogne before he came back, and had made everything in readiness against his return, yet this did not prevent his observing that "I had been a long while absent."

As I am dealing with the subject, I may as well here mention, even though chronologically out of place, certain facts which will show the reader how strict and unremitting my duties as a servant were.

Continual moving about in the service of the Emperor had brought on an affection of the bladder of a most distressingly painful nature. For a long time, by patience and careful dieting, I sought to

ward off danger; but at last my sufferings grew absolutely unbearable, and, in 1808, I asked His Majesty to give me a month's leave, in order to lay up. Doctor Boyer told me that I should at least want a month in which to get cured, and if I did not take care of myself, the malady might become incurable. My request was granted, and I went home to my wife's family at Saint-Cloud. M. Yvan, the Emperor's surgeon, came to see me every day. A week had scarcely passed when he told me that His Majesty thought I must be cured by this time, and desired me to resume my duties. Such a wish was tantamount to a command; at least, this is what I felt; so I accordingly returned to the Emperor, who, noticing my pallor, and that I was in great pain, condescended to say many kind things to me, though he never alluded to my having any further leave of absence. For sixteen years these were the only two holidays that I ever got, and on my return from Moscow, and during the French campaign, my malady was at its most critical term, so that when I left the Emperor at Fontainebleau, it was because I found it absolutely impossible to perform my duties. After this—to me—most painful separation, it took a whole year for me to recover, and then only

partially. I shall refer to this sad time later on. I am here insisting on facts which go to prove that I had more right than some others I could name to consider myself an important person, as apparently my humble services were indispensable to the conqueror of Europe. It would have been harder for many of the inmates of the Tuileries to demonstrate their *utility* than it was for me. Does this sound all too vain? Will the chamberlains and all those fine gentlemen have a right to feel annoyed? I cannot say. I am merely concerned with my tale. The Emperor always adhered to his habits. As may be seen, he always liked me to wait upon him, and preferred me to anybody else, though I must say the other grooms of the chamber were most zealous and devoted in their attention. But I had been longest in his service, and never left him. On one occasion, at midday, the Emperor asked for some tea. M. Sénéchal was in attendance, so he made some and brought it to His Majesty, who declared that it was detestable. I was sent for, and the Emperor complained to me that they "wanted to poison him." [Whenever he did not like anything, that is what he always said.] Going back to the kitchen, I poured out another cup of

tea *from the same tea-pot*, placed it on a salver, and took it to the Emperor, together with two enamelled tea-spoons, one for me to taste the beverage in his presence, and the other for himself. This time he said the tea was excellent, and complimented me upon it, with that easy, good-natured familiarity with which he sometimes treated his servants. On handing me back the cup, he pulled my ear and said, "For heaven's sake, do teach them how to make tea; they know absolutely nothing about it."

M. de Bourrienne, whose excellently-written "Memoirs" I had great pleasure in reading, says somewhere, that the Emperor, when in a good humour, used to pinch the tips of his servants' ears. From personal experience, I can affirm that he used to pinch not merely the tip, but the whole of the ears, sometimes catching hold of both of them at once, in quite masterly fashion. M. de Bourrienne also states that the Emperor dealt out his little playful slaps on the face with two fingers only. This is a very mild way of putting it. Albeit his hand was not a large one, His Majesty used to distribute his favours far more generously—caresses, indeed, but of a somewhat robust sort.

With his domestics, the Emperor was friendly and

jocular, chatting to them, and enquiring about their family, their business, and even about their amusements. So soon as his toilette was completed, his face suddenly changed: it grew grave and pensive, and took on its Imperial mien. It has been said that he used to strike his servants. That is a falsehood. I never saw him lose his temper like that but once, and herein he was, in a measure, justified by circumstances. The following are the facts of the incident, which occurred at Vienna the day after the death of General Lannes. The Emperor was deeply affected, and all the while he was dressing never spoke a word. Directly he was ready he asked for his horse. As ill-luck would have it, M. Jardin, his head-groom, was not at the stables when the horse was saddled, and the stable-lad had not given the horse its usual bridle. Hardly had His Majesty mounted than the animal, growing restive, reared, and its rider fell heavily to the ground. Jardin arrived just as the Emperor rose in a great passion, who, letting his temper get the better of him, struck the groom across the face with his riding-whip. Jardin withdrew in confusion; and a few hours later, M. de Caulaincourt, head of the Royal stables, took the opportunity, when alone with His Majesty, of expressing Jardin's regret for having angered him.

The Emperor said he was very sorry that he had been so hasty, sent for Jardin, and spoke to him in such a kindly way that he readily forgot all that had taken place. A few days afterwards he made him a present of three thousand francs. I am told that the same thing happened to M. Vigogne, the elder, in Egypt.[1] Yet, even if this were true, surely two such instances in the Emperor's whole life, under circumstances of great provocation, would never warrant the hateful charge made against him of "cruelly beating his servants."

1 "We reached Tentoura on May 20th. The stifling heat caused universal discouragement. As resting-place we had only the dry, burning sand, while to our right lay the sea, bare and hostile. Since leaving Acre, our losses in sick and wounded were already considerable. The outlook was far from hopeful. So distressing indeed was the state of the so-called 'triumphant army'—a mere wreck of its former self—that Napoleon could not help being deeply concerned thereat. He had scarcely reached Tentoura than he had his tent pitched. Sending for me, in pre-occupied fashion he dictated an order for everyone to journey on foot, and to let the horses, mules and camels be used by the wounded and sick whom we had brought along with us and who still showed faint signs of life. 'Take that to Berthier!' The order was at once despatched. I had hardly got back to the tent than Vigogne the elder, the General's head equerry, came in. Touching his hat, he said, 'Which horse is to be reserved for yourself, General?' In the first flush of anger at such a question, Napoleon struck his equerry a violent blow across the face with his riding-whip, adding, in a terrible voice, 'Everybody has got to go on foot, d——n you! and I'll lead the way! Didn't you hear the order? Be off!'"—*Memoirs of M. de Bourrienne.*

CHAPTER XVI

The Emperor a hard worker—Roustan and the flask of brandy—The Boulogne army—The Emperor's quarters at Pont de Briques—The huge mortars—The Emperor fires the first bomb-shell—Marshal Soult's quarters—The Emperor from his room inspects Dover and its garrison—Prince Joseph's quarters—Instance of the Emperor's good-nature—English spies shot—A schoolmaster shot—The town panic-struck—A false alarm—Madame F.'s imperturbability—The Commandant sentenced to death, but pardoned by the Emperor.

At Pont de Briques, his head-quarters, the Emperor showed himself as hard a worker as in his study at the Tuileries. After his rides, inspections, visits and reviews, he took a hasty meal, and returning to his study sat up half the night at work. Thus the life he led was the same as that in Paris. When out riding, it was always Roustan who accompanied him everywhere, who used to carry a little silver flask of brandy, though of this His Majesty seldom or never made use.

The Boulogne army included nearly 150,000 infantry and 90,000 cavalry, divided into four different

camps, the Right camp, the Left camp, the Wimereux camp and the Ambleteuse camp.

Pont de Briques was so called because certain foundations of brick had been discovered there—the remains of one of Cæsar's camps. As already stated, it is about half a league from Boulogne, and His Majesty's head-quarters were in the only habitable house in the place, being guarded by mounted sentries of the Imperial Guard.

The four camps were pitched on high ground overlooking the sea, and when the weather was fine the English coast could be plainly seen. In the Right camp there were quarters for the Emperor, for Admiral Bruix, for Marshal Soult, and for M. Decrès, at that time Minister of Marine.

The Emperor's quarters were built of ordinary wood in rude style, like some booth at a fair. Facing the sea, it comprised four rooms and a passage. The chief room, which served as "council-chamber," was papered in silver-grey, the ceiling being decorated with a design showing clouds and an azure sky, against which was an eagle holding lightnings, and led towards England by a star—the Emperor's guiding star. In the centre of this room was a large oval table, covered with green cloth. The only chair set beside it was the

Emperor's—of ordinary make, covered with green morocco and stuffed with horsehair. On the table there was a writing-desk. This constituted the entire furniture of the "council-chamber," His Majesty being the only person who could remain seated, while all his generals stood grouped about him, having no other support—during councils that often lasted three or four hours—than their sword-hilts.

A passage led to this council-chamber; on the right of it was His Majesty's bedroom, with a glass door to it, and a window overlooking the camp on the right and the sea on the left. The bedstead was of iron, with plain green curtains fixed to the ceiling by a gilt ring. There were two mattresses and bolsters at top and bottom, but no pillow. There were also two counterpanes, one green and one white, the green one being wadded and quilted; besides a gilt-rimmed porcelain chamber-pot placed unceremoniously under the bed. There were two folding-chairs on either side of the bed; the window curtains were of green muslin, and the wall-paper was pink, with an Etruscan border.

Opposite this sleeping apartment was another similarly-sized room, which contained a large telescope that cost 12,000 francs. It was about four

feet long and one broad, and was mounted on a three-foot stand. The case in which it was kept looked much like a grand piano in shape. In this same room, on two stools, was a square chest, covered with yellow leather, which contained linen and three complete suits of clothes. This was His Majesty's wardrobe during active service. It also contained a shabby old hat, lined with white satin. Being very sensitive about his head, the Emperor could not bear new hats, and always wore the same one as long as possible.

Admiral Bruix's quarters were constructed on much the same lines as those of the Emperor, only they were smaller. Close to his quarters was the semaphore for signalling purposes, by which he telegraphed the various movements which he wished the fleet to make. A little further on was a fort—a terrible battery, some of the mortars (the largest ever made) being sixteen inches thick and holding a charge of forty-five pounds of gunpowder, which could hurl a fifteen-hundred-pound shell a league and a half out to sea. The hurling of each such bomb cost the State three hundred francs. To light the fuses of such formidable weapons of destruction twelve-foot rods were used, the gunner crouching down as low as possible until the gun

had gone off. It was the Emperor himself who wished to fire the first shot. To the right of this fort were Marshal Soult's quarters, built in the form of a savage's hut, with rooms half underground and lighted from above. M. Decrès's quarters were much of the same kind.

From his quarters, the Emperor could watch all the naval manœuvres, and so good was his sight that Dover Castle and the garrison there were, so to speak, always before his eyes.

The Right camp, on the cliff, was divided up into streets, all named after some distinguished general. All along the cliff from Boulogne to Ambleteuse there were batteries, that is to say, for a distance of over two leagues.

To the left of the town, on the cliff, almost at a similar elevation, the Left camp was situated. Here were Prince Joseph's quarters, who at that time was Colonel of the 4th Regiment of the Line. This building had a thatched roof; and at the foot of the cliffs the Emperor had a dock made, some of the troops being employed in this work.

One day a young soldier, when up to his knees in mud, tried to extricate his barrow, which had sunk even deeper in the slime than he had. But

this he could not manage to do, and, bathed in sweat, he swore and cursed like any wrathful grenadier. Looking up suddenly, he caught sight of the Emperor, who was passing by on his way to the Left camp. The soldier beckoned to him, and in supplicating accents, besought him to come to his aid. His Majesty could not forbear smiling, and motioned the soldier to approach, which, after some pitiful floundering, the poor devil managed to do.

"What's your regiment?"

"The First of the Guard, Sire."

"How long have you been a soldier?"

"Ever since you have been an Emperor, Sire."

"The devil you have! Well, that's not very long—not long enough, anyhow, for me to make an officer of you, is it? Never mind, behave yourself well, and I'll make you sergeant-major; and then, if you like, after your first battle, you shall have the cross and the epaulettes. Will that do?"

"Yes, Sire."

Turning to General Berthier, the Emperor continued: "General, take down the name of this young man, and let him have three hundred francs, so that he can get his breeches cleaned and his barrow mended."

And then, amid the loud cheers of the men, His Majesty pursued his way.

Despite all precautions, spies from the English fleet used to find their way into Boulogne. Once caught, they got but short shrift; and yet these gentry (who landed, the Lord knows how) used to visit the play in the evening, and write their opinion of the actors and actresses, which they afterwards stuck up on the walls of the theatre. In this way they used to defy the police. One day, on the beach, two little boats covered with tarpaulin were found; and doubtless it was these of which the spies made use.

In June, 1804, eight Englishmen were arrested, all of them excellently well dressed, wearing white silk stockings, &c. Sulphurous implements were found in their possession, wherewith they purposed to set fire to the fleet. In an hour's time they were shot without further enquiry.

At Boulogne, too, there were traitors. One morning, a schoolmaster, who acted as secret agent to Lords Keith and Melvil, was caught on the cliff making signs to the enemy with his arms. Being instantly seized by the sentries, he loudly protested his innocence, and tried to turn the matter into a joke. But, on searching his papers, he was found

to be in correspondence with the English, which was proof positive of his guilt. He was tried by court-martial and shot the next day.

One night, about half-past eleven, rigged in French style and flying the French colours, a fire-ship, which had all the appearance of a gun-boat, approached our lines and passed through them. By some unpardonable negligence, the chain had not been drawn across the harbour that night. This vessel was followed by a second one, which exploded, blowing one of our war-sloops to atoms. The whole fleet was alarmed by this explosion; in a moment lights flashed in all directions, and by their glare the first fire-ship could be perceived floating on towards the pier. Hardly had it been stopped than it exploded with such force that all the window-panes in the town were smashed, while many folk, who, in default of beds, slept on tables, were pitched on to the floor, and could not make out the cause of their fall. In ten minutes everyone was stirring. They thought the English were in the harbour, and great was the outcry; so that men, beating drums, had to march about the streets and assure the terrified inhabitants that all the danger was over.

In the autumn of the same year, Boulogne had

another scare. One evening, about eight o'clock, a chimney on the right side of the harbour caught fire. The flames almost touched the masts of some of the ships, and a commandant, watching the blaze from the opposite side of the harbour, lost his head completely, being fearful that the ammunition stores might catch fire. He gave orders to sound a general alarm, and the appalling news spread with lightning speed. In less than half-an-hour more than sixty thousand men thronged the quays, church-bells beat a wild tocsin, guns boomed from every fort, and drummers and trumpeters rushed about the streets, making the most infernal row.

The Emperor was at head-quarters when the terrible cry of "The fleet's on fire" reached his ears. "It is impossible!" he exclaimed. Nevertheless, we started off that very minute.

On entering the town, what a fearful sight presented itself! Women rushed hither and thither like maniacs, clutching their babies and shrieking hysterically. Men fled from their homes, carrying with them their valuables, and they bumped against and fell over each other in the dark. Everywhere shrieks resounded of "Fly for your lives!" "We shall be blown up!" "We're done for!" and curses, oaths

and lamentations rent the air and made one's very hair stand on end.

His Majesty's aides-de-camp, and those of Marshal Soult, rode about in all directions stopping the drummers, and asking, "What are you beating an alarm for? Whoever gave you orders to do this?" "We don't know," was their answer; and then the drums redoubled their hideous tattoo, the crowd and the scuffling grew greater in the streets, and a rush was made for the gates, all being panic-struck, though an instant's reflection might have allayed their fears. Unfortunately, the panic-struck never reflect; it is impossible.

Yet it is only right to say that a considerable number of the inhabitants, less scared than others, stayed very quietly at home, being well aware that, if the fleet had really been on fire, they would not have had time even to utter a single cry. These it was who tried to reassure the terrified mob. Madame F., a pretty, charming woman, wife of a watch-maker, was in her kitchen getting supper ready when, white with fear, a neighbour rushed in, exclaiming, "Run for your life, madam; you haven't a moment to lose!"

"Why, what's the matter?"

"The fleet is on fire."

"Oh, what nonsense!"

"Fly, madam! fly for your life! I tell you the fleet is on fire!"

And catching hold of Madame's arm, the excited visitor sought to drag her out of the kitchen. At the moment Madame F. was cooking fritters over a stove. "Mind what you're doing," she laughingly cried; "you'll make me burn all my fritters!" And with a few half-serious, half-jocular words, she managed to reassure the poor devil, who, after awhile, began to laugh at his own cowardice.

At last the tumult subsided, and this period of wild terror was succeeded by one of great calm. Everyone listened for the explosion, but it never occurred. Then it was a false alarm, was it? So folk went home, no longer fearful of the fire, but of what might have happened in their absence. Thieves might have robbed them of all their belongings, having had every chance to do this. However, no cases of theft were reported.

Next day, the unfortunate officer who gave the alarm and started all the disorder was tried by court-martial, found guilty, and sentenced to death. His judges, however, recommended him to mercy, and he obtained the Emperor's pardon.

CHAPTER XVII

Distribution of the Legion of Honour at Boulogne—Duguesclin's helmet—Prince Joseph becomes Colonel—Military fête—Boat-races and horse-races—Official jealousy—The Emperor administers justice—The Minister of Marine tumbles into the water—The Emperor's gaiety—The general gastronomist—The ball—The Emperor dances with Madame Bertrand—The Boulognese at the ball—Madame Soult queen of the ball—The fair suppliant—The Emperor grants her request.

MANY of the brave lads belonging to the Boulogne army had, by their bravery in former campaigns, earned the cross of the Legion of Honour. His Majesty was desirous that the distribution of these honours should prove a memorable one, and accordingly he chose the day following his *fête* day for this function. It was the 16th of August, 1804. Never was there a finer sight.

At six o'clock in the morning, over 80,000 men left the four camps and marched in sections, led by the band, towards the open ground near Hubert Mill, on the cliffs behind the Right camp. Here a grand-stand had been erected about fifteen

feet high. Three flights of steps led up to this, one in the centre, and two at the side, all of them handsomely carpeted. Upon this amphitheatre of about forty square feet, three platforms were set. On the centre one was the Imperial chair, decorated with trophies and flags. The platform on the left was covered with seats intended for the Emperor's brothers and other notabilities. On the right hand platform was a tripod of antique design which supported a helmet—the helmet of Duguesclin I think it was—full of ribbons and crosses. Beside the tripod there was a seat for the Archchancellor.

About three hundred steps from the throne, the ground rose gradually, almost in the form of a a ring, and it was on this slope that the troops were drawn up. To the right of the throne, on an eminence, some sixty or eighty tents had been pitched by the sailors. Here the ladies of the town were located, and the effect was a most charming one, yet the fair occupants were far enough from the throne to make the use of opera-glasses necessary. Between these tents and the throne a detachment of the Imperial Horse Guards was stationed in full marching order.

The weather was lovely; not a cloud was in the sky; the English cruiser had vanished, and

on the blue sea, in proud array, one only saw our brilliant line of noble battle-ships.

At ten o'clock a salvo of artillery announced the departure of the Emperor. He left his head-quarters accompanied by more than eighty generals and by two hundred aides-de-camp, as well as all the members of his household. The Emperor wore the uniform of a full colonel of infantry, and galloped up to the foot of the throne amid universal acclamations, and the wildest din that ever drums, trumpets and cannon, all beating, resounding and booming in concert, could produce.

His Majesty took his seat, when his example was followed by everyone else, and the ceremony of presenting the orders at once commenced. An aide-de-camp called out the names of the men, who, in turn, approached the foot of the throne, bowed, and went up to the right-hand platform where the Archchancellor presented them with their brevet. Two pages, standing between the tripod and His Majesty, took the decoration out of Duguesclin's helmet, and handed it to the Emperor, who himself affixed it to each soldier's breast. At that moment, more than eight hundred drums beat a tattoo, and as each man so decorated descended by the steps on the left, the

band of twelve hundred musicians executed a gay fanfare. It is hardly necessary to say that, as each one received his decoration, there was a burst of cheering, and a double cry of "Long live the Emperor!"

The distribution, which began at ten o'clock, was not over till nearly three. Then aides-de-camp rode round to all the divisions, a salvo of artillery was fired, and eighty thousand men advanced in column within thirty paces of the throne. The noisy beat of the drums was followed by profound silence, and, in accordance with the Emperor's orders, the troops executed certain manœuvres for about an hour. Then each division passed before the throne on its way back to camp, each officer saluting with the point of his sword. Prince Joseph, newly appointed to the Colonelcy of the 4th Regiment of the Line, was much noticed by all those present. Next day the Left camp gave a military *fête*, which the Emperor attended. There were boat-races, as well as horse-races, and one of the latter was for a prize of twelve hundred francs. For this race a lieutenant of dragoons, a most popular officer with his company, desired to enter. But the committee, which comprised some of his superior officers, refused to

allow him to do so, saying that his rank was not high enough; but this was a mere pretext; they were really jealous of his skill as a rider. Stung by so unfair a refusal, the lieutenant appealed to the Emperor, who gave him permission to take part in the race, after enquiring privately as to the officer's *status*, and hearing that his character was irreproachable, and that a large family was solely dependent upon him.

At a given signal, the competitors started, and the lieutenant of dragoons soon outstripped his antagonists, and had all but reached the winning-post, when his horse stumbled and fell over an unlucky dog which ran across the course. Owing to this accident, the second horse, ridden by an aide-de-camp, was declared the winner. The lieutenant, getting up as well as he could, was about to withdraw, much crestfallen, though somewhat cheered by the spectators' sympathy, when the Emperor called him back, and said, "You deserve the prize, and so you shall have it. I herewith appoint you captain." Then, turning to the Grand Marshal of the Palace, he said, "Just pay over twelve hundred francs to Captain N——" (I cannot recollect his name). And everybody shouted, "Long live the Emperor!" while they proceeded

to congratulate the new captain upon his lucky tumble.

That night there were fireworks and illuminations, which could be plainly seen from the English coast. Thirty thousand troops executed all sorts of manœuvres with rockets attached to their muskets. So brilliant was the set-piece portraying the Imperial arms, that for five minutes Boulogne, the surrounding country and the coast, were all illumined as if by broad daylight.

A few days after these festivities, as the Emperor was passing from one camp to another, a sailor lay in wait for him to present a petition. Rain fell in torrents, and, in order not have his sheet of paper spoilt, the poor fellow was obliged to take shelter in a shed on the beach where ropes were stored. Drenched to the skin, he waited there for ever so long, until he saw the Emperor galloping past, when out he jumped, holding out his petition like some fencing-master about to make a desperate lunge. The Emperor's horse, startled by so sudden an apparition, shied and stopped short, while the Emperor glanced angrily at the sailor, and then rode on without accepting the petition thus oddly presented to him.

It was on that day, I think, that M. Decrès, the

Minister of Marine, fell into the water, much to His Majesty's amusement. A plank had been placed from the quay to the deck of the gun-boat, along which His Majesty lightly passed, being caught, as he came on deck, by one of the sailors. Being considerably stouter and far less active than the Emperor, M. Decrès walked gingerly along the plank, which, just as he got to the middle, broke—and splash! fell the Minister into the water. The noise made the Emperor turn round, and leaning over the vessel's side, he exclaimed, "Why, there's our Minister of Marine who has tumbled in! How could he possibly do such a thing!" And then the Emperor went into fits of laughter. Meanwhile two or three sailors hauled poor M. Decrès, all draggled and dripping, on board, while water spouted freely from nose, mouth and ears, and he looked very sheepish, especially when the Emperor proceeded to chaff him unmercifully.

Towards the close of our stay, the generals gave a grand ball in honour of the ladies of Boulogne, at which the Emperor was present. A large ball-room was constructed for the occasion, tastefully decorated with trophies, flags and garlands. General Bertrand was appointed M.C., and General Bisson superintended the refreshment department. This was ex-

actly to his taste, he being the greatest epicure in camp, whose huge belly when on the march became positively embarrassing. Nothing less than six or eight bottles of wine sufficed him at dinner, which he never took alone, for he found it irksome not to be able to gossip as he gorged. His guests were usually aides-de-camp, chosen—ironically, no doubt—from the most cadaverous, lanky officers in the army. It must be admitted that the buffet was in every way worthy of its superintendent.

The orchestra comprised twenty regimental bands, each playing in turn. At the opening of the ball, however, they joined forces in the performance of a triumphal march, while the aides-de-camp, in right gallant fashion, received the ladies and presented each with a bouquet.

To obtain admission to this ball it was necessary to hold, at least, the rank of commandant. It is impossible to form any adequate idea of the beauty of the whole scene, resplendent as this was with countless brilliant uniforms and gay dresses. The fifty or sixty ball-giving generals had all ordered sumptuous gold-embroidered uniforms from Paris, and as they stood grouped about His Majesty they sparkled with gold and diamonds. The Emperor remained for an hour and danced with Madame

Bertrand. He wore the uniform of a colonel of cavalry.

The queen of the ball was Madame Soult, wife of the Marshal. She wore a gown of black velvet covered with brilliants. At midnight, a splendid supper was served; General Bisson was responsible for this, which is tantamount to saying that nothing was wanting. The Boulogne ladies, who had never seen such a *fête* as this, were amazed. Some even thought fit to fill their pockets with sweetmeats and dainties. I believe that, if they could have done it, they would have carried away ballroom, band and dancers. For more than a month nothing else was talked of but this ball.

It was about this time that His Majesty, when out riding, happened to meet with a pretty girl of about fifteen or sixteen, dressed all in white, who, bursting into tears, knelt down in the roadway. The Emperor at once dismounted and, raising her up, good-naturedly asked what grieved her, and if he could help her. The poor child asked for pardon for her father, who had been employed in the commissariat department, and was now sentenced to penal servitude for fraud. The Emperor was not proof against so much youth and beauty. He forgave the offender.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Emperor's popularity at Boulogne—His unfortunate obstinacy—Admiral Bruix is firm—They quarrel—The Admiral exiled—Storm and shipwreck—The Emperor's courage—Infallible method of stifling discontent—The drummer saved by his drum—Dialogue between two sailors—The Emperor's manifesto—He leaves Boulogne—His financial difficulties—A creditor's flattery—How the engineer was paid off.

At Boulogne—as, indeed, everywhere else—the Emperor made himself beloved by his moderation, his justice, and the gracious, kindly way in which he showed himself mindful of the slightest services. Every inhabitant of Boulogne, every peasant in the country round about, would gladly have died for him. All his slightest peculiarities were eagerly noted and discussed. Once, however, his conduct provoked general blame—for he was unjust. I will here chronicle this deplorable incident, of which I have never yet seen a correct account.

One morning, while out riding, the Emperor signified his intention of reviewing the fleet, and gave orders for the ships to take up their respective positions, as the review was to be held right out at

sea. He went out for his usual ride with Roustan, requesting that all might be ready against his return. Everyone knew that the Emperor's wish was law, and, in his absence, Admiral Bruix was informed of it, who coolly replied that he was really very sorry, but that there could be no review that day. Consequently, not a vessel budged.

On coming back, the Emperor asked if all were ready, when he was told of the Admiral's reply. Twice was this answer repeated to him, to the tone of which he was wholly unused, and, stamping his foot violently, he sent for the Admiral, who at once obeyed the summons. Yet his alacrity was not sufficient for the Emperor, who, followed by his staff, went out to meet him half-way, as from his eyes lightnings flashed.

"How comes it, Admiral," said the Emperor, in an altered voice, "that you have not carried out my instructions?"

"Sire," replied Bruix, respectfully but firmly, "an awful storm is brewing; Your Majesty can see that as well as I can. Does Your Majesty wish thus uselessly to imperil the lives of so many brave fellows?"

The oppressive atmosphere and murmurings of distant thunder indeed justified the Admiral's fears.

"Sir," exclaimed the Emperor, with increasing irritation, "I gave an order. Once more I ask, how is it you did not execute it? I alone am responsible for the consequences. Obey!"

"Sire, I shall *not* obey."

"Monsieur, you are an insolent fellow!"

And the Emperor, who still had his whip in his hand, advanced towards the Admiral with a threatening gesture. Admiral Bruix, stepping back, gripped his sword-hilt.

"Have a care, Sire," said he, turning deadly pale.

All onlookers grew cold with fright. For some time, with arm uplifted, the Emperor stood motionless, glaring at the Admiral, who unflinchingly maintained his grim attitude. At last the Emperor flung away his whip, and M. Bruix relinquished his grasp of his sword-hilt as, bare-headed, he silently awaited the result of so terrible a scene.

"Vice-Admiral Magon," said the Emperor, "you will at once execute the movement which I ordered. As for you, sir," he continued, turning to Admiral Bruix, "you will leave Boulogne in twenty-four hours and withdraw to Holland. Begone!"

Then His Majesty at once passed on, while some of the officers (though very few) gave the Admiral a farewell shake of the hand.

Meanwhile, Vice-Admiral Magon proceeded to carry out the Emperor's instructions. Yet scarcely had the first dispositions been taken than the sea assumed a fearful aspect, as from the darkening heavens lightnings darted, while thunder boomed incessantly in angry peals, and there came a great wind, which threw the vessels into grievous disorder, breaking all their lines. In short, that which the Admiral foresaw occurred, and a most appalling tempest dispersed all the war-ships in such a way that their destruction seemed assured. Anxious, with head lowered and folded arms, the Emperor paced the beach, when, all at once, fearful cries were heard. More than twenty gun-boats, manned by soldiers and sailors, had run aground, and their wretched crews, struggling wildly with the waves, called piteously for the help that all seemed afraid to give. The Emperor, seeing how horror-struck were all his generals, sought to set an example himself, and, in spite of all their efforts to hold him back, he leaped into a life-boat, exclaiming, "Hands off! hands off! we must save them somehow." The boat instantly began to fill with water, the waves broke over it, and the Emperor was drenched. By one wave he was well-nigh washed overboard; it carried away his hat. Fired by such

dauntless pluck, officers and civilians, soldiers and sailors, all plunged headlong into the raging sea, and swam to the aid of the drowning. But only a few of all that company could be rescued, and next day over two hundred corpses were strewn along the shore, together with the hat worn by the proud victor of Marengo. That day was, indeed, a day of mourning for Boulogne, and for the camp. Everyone anxiously hastened to the beach to search for some relative or friend among the bodies heaped up there by the waves; while the Emperor bitterly rued that obstinacy of his, which, in his heart of hearts, he knew had brought about such a dreadful catastrophe. By his order, certain of his agents went through town and camp distributing gold, to silence murmurs that were on the point of making themselves heard. That day I saw a drummer, belonging to one of the vessels, who floated ashore on his drum, as if it had been a raft. The poor fellow had had his thigh broken, and in this dreadful plight had been over twelve hours afloat.

Before I have done with the camp at Boulogne, let me tell what actually took place there in August, 1805, after the Emperor returned from his journey and from being crowned in Italy.

Soldiers and sailors were one and all burning with impatience to set sail for England; yet the longed-for moment never came. Each evening one used to say, "To-morrow there will be a stiff breeze, it will be foggy, and we shall start," and by such hopes as these were we buoyed up. Morning broke, however, bringing sunshine or rain.

One evening, when the wind was favourable, I overheard two sailors chatting on the quay, discussing probabilities.

"The Emperor had best start to-morrow morning," quoth one; "he'll never get better weather. There's sure to be a fog."

"Bah!" cries the other, "he's not dreaming of such thing! Why, the fleet hasn't stirred for a whole fortnight. He doesn't mean to go off all in a hurry like that."

"Yet ammunition and everything else is on board. They've only got to whistle, and away we go."

Just then they were changing guard, and so I heard no more of this talk between two old salts. But I soon discovered that their surmises were correct, for towards three o'clock in the morning a slight mist overspread the sea, which

was rather rough, as the land-breeze of last night was still blowing. As day broke, the mist grew denser, hiding our fleet from the English. Absolute silence reigned; not a sign of the enemy all night long; as the sailors had prophesied, everything was favourable for our landing.

At five a.m. signals flashed from the semaphore. All the sailors were on deck in the twinkling of an eye; the harbour rang with their cheers; the order to start had been given. While vessels were being got under weigh, the drums in all four camps beat an alarm, and the whole army hurriedly marched down to the town, scarcely crediting the news. "So we're off at last," cried they, "and we're going to have a word or two with those b——— Englishmen!" And their excited cheers were only stopped by the drum. The embarking took place amid profound silence, with such perfect order that words fail me to describe it.

In seven hours 200,000 soldiers were on board the fleet, and, just as this splendid army was about to put out to sea, amid the acclamations of all the populace that crowded on to the cliffs and the quays — just as all the men, bareheaded, broke forth into loud bursts of cheering, a message reached head-quarters which resulted in the recall of all the

troops to camp. A telegraphic despatch, received at that instant by His Majesty, necessitated his moving the troops in another direction.

Sadly the soldiers went back to their quarters, some expressing, in loud and vehement fashion, their disappointment at such mystification. They had always looked upon the English expedition as one, the success of which was certain; and to be thus baulked at the very moment of starting, seemed to them the greatest of all mischances.

When all was in readiness, the Emperor repaired to the Right camp and made the following proclamation, which was afterwards posted up in the other camps:

"BRAVE SOLDIERS OF BOULOGNE CAMP!—You are not to go to England. Bribed by British gold, the Emperor of Austria has just declared war against France. His troops have broken across the frontier-line which it behoved him to guard. Bavaria is invaded. Soldiers! beyond the Rhine fresh laurels await you; let us hasten to the conquest of those whom erstwhile we conquered!"

Such a manifesto was greeted with wild enthusiasm; the eyes of every man glistened again. Little did it matter to such as they if England or Austria were the goal. They were athirst for battle; war was declared; they had got their heart's desire.

Thus it was that all the grand schemes for the invasion of England vanished; schemes so cunningly devised, and which had taken such a long time to become mature. To-day there is no doubt that, with time and perseverance, such an enterprise would have met with complete success. Yet this was not to be.

Some regiments remained at Boulogne, and while their comrades were annihilating Austria, they erected on the beach a monumental column that should long serve as the memento of Napoleon and his immortal army.

Directly after the manifesto to which I have alluded, His Majesty gave orders to have everything got ready for his immediate departure. The Grand Marshal of the Palace was instructed to defray all expenses incidental upon the Imperial visits, though the Emperor, as was his wont, told this official not to pay too much, nor too highly. I believe that I have already remarked that in all matters of his own personal expense the Emperor was extremely economical, and that he was afraid to spend as much as twenty francs unless such an outlay was absolutely necessary.

Among other bills that had to be paid, the Grand Marshal got one from M. Sordi, the engineer

in charge of the military communications and who had superintended the interior and exterior decoration of the Emperor's quarters. The bill amounted to some fifty thousand francs. The Grand Marshal was horrified at such a figure and gave the invoice back to M. Sordi, saying that he could not possibly authorise payment for the same until he had first consulted the Emperor.

The engineer bowed and withdrew, assuring the Grand Marshal that there was not the slightest overcharge; that he had only carried out his instructions, bit by bit, and that consequently no discount whatever could be allowed.

Next day, M. Sordi was commanded to appear before His Majesty. The Emperor was in his quarters, the object of the discussion. Before him lay, not the engineer's bill, but a map on which he was tracing the probable route of his army. M. Sordi entered, and was presented by General Caffarelli; as the door was ajar, both the General and myself could overhear what passed.

"Sir," said the Emperor, "you have spent far too much money in decorating these wretched barracks—yes, indeed, far too much! Fifty thousand francs. Fancy that! Why, it's appalling. I shall not pay you!"

Nonplussed by this sudden plunge *in medias res*, the engineer was at a loss for an answer. Fortunately, the Emperor glanced down again at the map in his hand, which gave him time to recover himself and say, "Sire, the gold clouds on this ceiling which surround Your Majesty's guiding star cost twenty thousand francs, I can honestly assure you. But had I consulted the hearts of your subjects, the Imperial Eagle, which now once again is about to annihilate the enemies of France and of your throne, would have spread out its wings in the midst of diamonds of the rarest water!"

"Good," said the Emperor, laughing, "very good; but I shall not settle up with you now; indeed, as you tell me that this excessively expensive Eagle is going to annihilate the Austrians, I prefer to pay your bill with the rix-dollars of the German Emperor and the gold frederics of the King of Prussia." Hereupon His Majesty took up his compasses and proceeded to study the map as before.

As a matter of fact, the engineer was not paid until after the battle of Austerlitz; and then it was in rix-dollars and frederics, just as the Emperor had said.

CHAPTER XIX

Journey to Belgium—I get a day's leave—The inhabitants of Alost—They all honour the valet because of his master—The Emperor's kindness to me—Madame ——'s Diary of the Journey to Aix-la-Chapelle—The truth about this diary—My reasons for including it in these Memoirs.

TOWARDS the close of November, the Emperor left Boulogne for a tour in Belgium, intending afterwards to rejoin the Empress, who had gone by herself to Aix-la-Chapelle. Everywhere *en route* he was greeted with honours that only crowned heads receive, yet with an enthusiasm provoked more by his personality than by his power. To all the *fêtes* and rejoicings incidental to this journey I shall not allude, for of these, details exist elsewhere; I am only desirous to speak of what touches me personally, or, at least, of what each one and everyone is not cognisant. Suffice it to say that we passed through Arras, Valenciennes, Mons, Brussels, &c., in triumphal fashion, and at each gateway the Municipal Council presented His Majesty with the wine of honour and the keys of

the city. We stayed some days at Laaken, and as this was only five leagues from Alost, where relatives of mine were living, I asked the Emperor for a day's leave, which he granted me, albeit with difficulty. At that time, Alost, like the rest of Belgium, professed the greatest attachment for the Emperor. When there I had hardly a moment to call my own. I stayed at the house of a friend, a Monsieur D., whose family had long held high positions in the Belgian government. Here nearly all the town came to pay me a visit; yet I was not vain enough to take such a compliment entirely to myself. They were really anxious to get hold of the slightest details concerning the great man in whose service I was. For this reason I was fêted in the most extraordinary way, and my twenty-four hours passed all too soon. When I got back, His Majesty asked me all sorts of questions about the town of Alost, its inhabitants, and what they thought about him personally and his government. Without flattery, I was able to reply that they were all devoted to him. He seemed pleased, and made many kind enquiries as to my relatives, my family, and my own petty private interests. Next day we went on to Laaken. The Emperor liked this town. He made several

important alterations and improvements in the palace there, which thus became a most charming residence.

This Imperial journey lasted nearly three months; and we did not get back to Saint-Cloud until October. At Cologne and Coblenz the Emperor received visits from several German Princes and Princesses; but as I could only get to know by hearsay as to what took place on these occasions, it was my intention not to allude thereto, when, strange to say, I came across a manuscript giving all the details that I was not in a position to acquire. It was in this way that I became possessed of so curious a diary:

It appears that one of the Empress's ladies-in-waiting used to note down every day all that happened of interest in the Imperial family. These reminiscences—among which were several portraits no whit too flattering—had been brought to the Emperor's notice, as some then surmised, by an indiscreet and treacherous waiting-maid.

In these "Memoirs of Madame ——," Their Majesties met, as I think, with most unjust treatment. The Emperor was furious, and "Madame ——" received her dismissal. The day that His Majesty had been reading these manuscripts in his bedchamber at Saint-Cloud, his secretary, who used to

carry off all papers to the Emperor's study, must have overlooked one small *cahier*, which I picked up on the floor near the Emperor's bath. This proved to be no other than the "Account of the Empress's Journey to Aix-la-Chapelle"; seemingly it formed a part of the "Memoirs of Madame ——." As we were just starting for Paris, and as I thought papers left about like this were of no importance, I threw the manuscript on to the top of a cupboard, and thought no more about it. Two years afterwards, when ransacking every corner of this same bed-chamber, I came upon the dust-covered pages of "Madame ——'s Diary." The Emperor at that time had other things to engross his attention than a petty annoyance dating back to 1805, and I deemed it wiser not to remind him of anything so unpleasant. But as in this narrative I found certain piquant details respecting Their Majesties' return to Aix-la-Chapelle, I did not consider myself guilty of great indiscretion in carrying off the MS.; and I hope that no one will object to finding this included in my own "Memoirs." However, I beg to protest at the outset against any attempt to hold me responsible for the opinions of "Madame ——." She was of those who, either by birth or other circumstances, belonged to the "ancien régime," and who, while

eager to accept office in the Emperor's household, preserved all their prejudices and all their hatred of him. This same hatred has led the writer of the "Diary" to be grossly unjust towards Their Majesties; and to certain of such criticisms as seem to me inexact, I have made rejoinder by sundry notes. As regards her allusions to the German Princes and others, "Madame ——" appears to have been both witty and accurate, if a trifle too mocking.

CHAPTER XX

DIARY OF THE JOURNEY TO MAYENCE.

PART THE FIRST.

July 14*th*, 1804.

What a tiring day! We all met at the château at eleven o'clock to accompany the Empress to the Invalides Church, to be present at the distribution of decorations of the Legion of Honour. In a tribune, facing the Emperor's throne, we saw nineteen hundred chevaliers presented. This ceremony was momentarily interrupted by the entrance of a working-man, dressed in a plain smock, who mounted the steps of the throne. Napoleon paused in surprise; the man was questioned, who showed his brevet, and, in due course, received his decoration. The *cortège*, on returning, took the same route through the main alley of the Tuileries. It is the first time that Napoleon ever drove through the gardens. On reaching the Empress's apartments, he went to the

window. Some children, playing on the terrace, saw him and cried, "Long live the Emperor!" He drew back with a gesture of decided annoyance, and remarked, "I am the worst-lodged sovereign in all Europe! I can't imagine why the public is allowed to come so close to my palace." I must say, if I had got to the Tuileries in the way that Napoleon did, I should have deemed it fitter not to seem as if I were badly lodged.

If it was the result of this little touch of temper, I cannot say, but as he passed us he went up to Madame de la Vallette, and kicked the edge of her gown, saying, "Fie, madam, what a gown! What trimming! It's in the very worst of taste!" Madame de la Vallette seemed somewhat disconcerted.

In the evening we went up into the balcony of the centre pavilion to hear the concert given in the garden. After a minute or so, the Emperor took it in his head that he would like to see the Louvre statues by torchlight. So footmen brought torches, and we went along the grand gallery, down to the hall where were the antiques. While examining these, Napoleon stopped for a good while beside a bust of Alexander, affectedly bidding us note that the head was necessarily ill-shaped, it being too big. Alexander

was much smaller than he was, forsooth! This he observed with marked emphasis upon the "much smaller." I was a little way off, but I overheard him. He came closer, and repeated the same phrase, seeming delighted to let us know that he was bigger than Alexander. Oh, how little did he seem to me at that moment!

July 15th.

This evening I was at a house whither the Princess Dolgorouky came, after visiting the Tuileries. They asked her what she thought of it, when she replied, "It is a great power, certainly; but it is not what you call a Court."

July 19th.

The Emperor leaves to-morrow to inspect boats at Boulogne, and the Empress goes to Aix-la-Chapelle for the waters. I have to accompany her.

July.

This morning, before leaving Saint-Cloud, the Empress crossed two rooms to give an order to one of the inferior members of her household. M. d'Harville, her groom of the chambers, came for-

ward in alarm respectfully to intimate to Her Majesty that this was compromising the dignity of the Throne, and that all orders should be given through him. "Ah, sir," cried Josephine, merrily, "such etiquette is all right for Princesses born in the purple and used to the trammels imposed by sovereignty; but I, who for so many years was lucky enough to live like any other private person, am quite content to give my orders without a mouth-piece." The Groom of the Chambers bowed, and we started.

Sedan, July 30th.

This morning I found Josephine very busy, reading a large sheet of manuscript, and, to my surprise, I found that she was learning her lesson. When she travels, everything is fixed and arranged for in advance. Thus we know in what place she will be harangued by the local officials, and what her answer to such addresses will be, saying this to one person and that to another. All is regulated, even the presents which she has to give. But she has occasional lapses of memory, when, if her reply is not quite as suitable as that prepared for her in writing, at least it is so agreeable and good-humoured that it always pleases.

Liège, August 1st.

I was afraid that we should never get here. The Emperor, without finding out if a projected road through the Ardennes forest had ever been made, merely marked out ours on the map. In accordance with his instructions, relays were got ready, and scores of times we were very nearly smashed to pieces; indeed, some of the carriages were so battered about that they had to be bound together with ropes. One ought not to expect women to travel about like a lot of dragoons.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 7th, 1804.

The Empress is staying here at the house of a M. de Jacoby, recently purchased by the Emperor. It was said to be a very pleasant residence, but we were disagreeably surprised to find it both squalid and small. The Prefect was anxious for Josephine to stay at the Prefecture, yet such is her abject submission to Bonaparte, that, unless he allowed it, she did not dare to accept the invitation. He wants to conciliate the people in the united departments, and make them attached to France. That is why he bought this place of M. de Jacoby, and paid four times its actual value for it.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August, 1804.

This morning, when reading the newspaper *Le Publiciste,* Josephine was disagreeably surprised to find an account of her leave-taking of the Mayoress of Rheims, at whose house she usually stayed when passing through the town. It often happens that, carelessly, one says something senseless without being aware of it. But when such a foolish remark meets your eye in print, its absurdity becomes only too plain. On leaving Rheims, the Empress presented the Mayoress with a malachite medallion set in brilliants, and, embracing her, said, "It is the colour of Hope." As matter of fact, Hope had nothing whatever to do with it; such a speech was absolutely nonsensical. I was there at the time, and I heard it; but this morning, of course, I was far too wary to admit that I recollected it. Josephine was in despair; she solemnly vowed that she had never said anything of the sort; it would have been cruel to contradict her. Her private secretary suggested that a formal contradiction should be sent to the journal in question. She reflected for a moment, but, whether memory suddenly came to her aid, or whether she feared to do something that Bonaparte would not like, she merely wrote to him, denying having ever said

such a silly thing, stating, too, that her first impulse had been to give it formal contradiction, but that she would do nothing without his instructions. A courier was forthwith despatched to Boulogne.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 11th.

Our life here is tedious and monotonous. With the exception of a daily drive through the outskirts of the town, one day is exactly like another. The Picard Troupe have come here and will stay as long as the Empress does. Every night we go and yawn at the theatre; no one has any idea how boring the Picard repertory is, after a while. Wit there is, certainly, and some scenes are played with great comic power, but the subjects always deal with the lowest of low life; one can never get quit of the diligence or the Rue Saint-Denis. The novelty of the thing may amuse, just for once in a way, but soon one gets tired of perpetual estrangement from one's own surroundings.

August 11th.

As we did not go to the theatre to-night, and as somebody mentioned the exhibition of a relief-map of Paris, the Empress expressed a wish to see this.

It was a fine evening, so she proposed that we should walk. M. d'Harville, the eternal champion of etiquette, was in despair. He sought to express his opinion, but we were already well on our way. The fact was, he was quite right, as the sequel to this diversion shows. The streets are well-nigh deserted at evening time and we hardly met a soul, going; but while we were examining the map, news of our nocturnal promenade got about, and, on coming out, lights were in all the windows and people thronged our passage. Our procession must have looked rather funny—the gentlemen, bareheaded, with sword at side, giving us their arms and helping us to thread our way through the hustling crowd, whose rags contrasted oddly with our feathers, diamonds and long trains. At last we got to the Prefecture. The Empress felt that she had done a foolish thing; she frankly admitted this.

August 14th, 1804.

This morning I was alone with Josephine for some considerable time. She talked to me in such a confidential way that I should have been much flattered had I not daily noticed that such abandonment on her part was natural and necessary.

She is exactly like a ten-year-old child — good-natured, frivolous, impressionable; in tears at one moment, and comforted the next. Regarding her wit, one might quote Molière's speech about the probity of a certain individual who "had just enough to save him from the gallows." She has precisely wit enough not to be an utter idiot. Ignorant—as are most creoles—she has learned nothing, or next to nothing, except by conversation; but having passed her life in good society, she has got good manners, grace, and a mastery of that sort of jargon which, in society, sometimes passes for wit. Social events constitute the canvas which she embroiders, which she arranges, and which gives her a subject for conversation. She is witty for quite a whole quarter-of-an-hour every day. What I find charming about her is her diffidence; for one in her position, this is a great merit. If, among those persons about her, she finds wit and judgment, she consults them with charming simplicity and candour. Her own temper is very sweet and even; it is impossible not to be fond of her. I fear that it is just this need of unbosoming, of communicating all her thoughts and impressions, of telling all that passes between herself and the Emperor, which keeps the latter from taking her into his

confidence. This confidence she complains of not possessing. She told me this morning that, during all the years that she had spent with him, never once had she seen him let himself go; and that, if occasionally he seemed somewhat confiding, it was only to excite the confidence of his listener; he never showed people all that was in his mind. She told me that he is very superstitious, and that one day, when in Italy with the troops, he broke the glass of her miniature, which he carried in his pocket. He was in despair, feeling sure that this was a warning of her death; nor had he a moment's rest until the courier returned to reassure him that such was not the case. The Emperor at that time was still in love with Josephine.

August 15th.

When out walking this morning, Josephine resumed the talk with me begun yesterday. I was alone in the carriage with her, and she spoke about M. de Talleyrand. She will have it that he hates her for no other reason than the unpleasantness that occurred between them. Alas! it is but too true that no one ever forgives an insult. On the history of the human heart, these words stand

graven in large letters. During the time that Bonaparte was away in Egypt, when he was looked upon as lost, M. de Talleyrand, who always kept on the strong side, used often to show great politeness towards Madame Bonaparte. One day, however, he and she were both dining with Barras, and Madame Tallien was among the guests. This woman, famed for her beauty, is said to have had a great hold over Barras. M. de Talleyrand, seated between the two ladies, paid such marked attention to Madame Tallien, and showed such scant courtesy to Madame Bonaparte, that Josephine, knowing him to be the most finished courtier, thought that Bonaparte must surely be dead for him to treat her so rudely, for if he had thought that Bonaparte would ever come back to France he would have feared that the latter would have revenged such incivility. It was this idea, as well as wounded pride, which caused her to leave the table in tears. Talleyrand never forgot this circumstance, and, fearing that some day Josephine might be wishful and powerful enough to have her revenge, he has done all he could in the last three months before the Empire was established to get Napoleon to obtain a divorce and marry the Princess Wilhelmina of Baden, using all his craft to point out

how by such a marriage the Emperor would become the ally of Russia and Bavaria, and secure their support, and how needful it was to consolidate his Empire by the hope of heirs to the throne. For a while Napoleon wavered, but finally he managed to resist, and Josephine is no longer uneasy upon this point. The sequel shows that she was mistaken.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 18th.

There is general stir in the palace. Bonaparte is coming to-morrow. It is strange that, filling such an exalted position as he does, he is not beloved.[1] This would be so easy when, to make people happy, only the wish to do so is wanted. But it seems to me that he does not often have this wish, for, from the lowest footman to the first officer of the Crown, everyone feels a kind of terror at his approach. The Court is going to be a very brilliant one.

1 This, at any rate, is a gross error. The Emperor knew how to make himself beloved; in fact, he had the affection of all his household servants. Not one of them, I dare swear, would contradict my assertion. That the Emperor was not liked by his courtiers is very probable. With such power as he had, it was easier to inspire ingratitude than affection; in fact, the gratitude of courtiers is proverbial. Yet, is it fair to blame His Majesty for this?—NOTE BY CONSTANT.

The Ambassadors, not having yet presented their credentials since the metamorphosis from Consul to Emperor, have now all arrived in order to do this. The Court stops here a few days longer, and then goes to Cologne and Coblenz, where it will remain some days and then proceed to Mayence, where all the Princes forming the Rhenish Confederation are to assemble.

August 19th.

He has come, and with him his spies and all the usual disagreeables in his train, banishing all mirth from our little Court. His return has shown us that among the twelve persons told off to accompany Josephine here, there is at least one who is a spy. Napoleon knew, when he got here, on what day it was that our walk took place, and what day we had a picnic in the wood with Madame de Sémonville. The informant (whom we know) thought to give greater value to such news by blaming General Lorges, who is young and shapely, for what was the fault of an old soldier, who, having spent the best part of his life in the ranks, might be forgiven for not knowing that he ought not to sit down in the Empress's presence, nor on the same divan. Josephine was too good-natured to tell him

of his want of manners, fearing it would mortify him. This proof of her kindness was distorted into a tale of her guilty familiarity with a young man, towards whom she showed herself friendly, since he seemed so perfectly at his ease in her society. It was intended that the Emperor should draw his own conclusions from the facts reported; but Josephine found it easy to explain matters, and to prove who was really culpable. The old officer's age and want of social experience served to acquit him of any disloyal intention. How strange[1] that a man who has spent his whole life in camp, and who has been born and bred a Republican, should attach such importance to trifles of this sort! No doubt, love of power is natural to a man. Like a child that squabbles with its playmate for the possession of some toy, so sovereigns wrangle for the provinces that each seeks to wrest from the other.

August 20th, 1804.

This morning, Napoleon received the municipal authorities. All came away from this audience

1 Surely it is equally strange that Madame —— should wonder at the Emperor holding his honour and his wife dear enough to be jealous of both! Republican instincts and love of power have nothing whatever to do with it.—NOTE BY CONSTANT.

abashed, astounded to the last degree. "What a man!" observed the Mayor to me. "What a prodigy! What a universal genius! How is it that he knows more about this remote department than we do ourselves? No detail escapes him; he knows everything; he is aware of all our industrial produce." I smiled, and was fain to tell this good man, who went about proclaiming his admiration thus, enough to check his enthusiasm not a little, viz., that this accurate acquaintance with details which Napoleon appears to possess is a mere piece of clap-trap, designed to impress the vulgar. He has a table of statistics drawn up, exact in every particular, relating to France and the united departments. When on a journey, he takes with him the sections which refer to the districts through which he is travelling; and, an hour before the audience is held, he learns these passages by heart. Then he makes his appearance and talks glibly about everything, like one whose mind has a complete grasp of all the vast country that he governs, leaving his hearers speechless with admiration. An hour later, he does not remember a single word of all that he has been talking about. The Prefect, M. Méchin, attended this audience with his habitual air of assurance, never expecting to undergo such

a cross-examination. Napoleon, who had just learnt his lesson, asked him several questions, to which he could give no answer. He became embarrassed and confused. "Sir," said the Emperor, "when one knows thus little about a department, one is not fit to govern it." And he forthwith dismissed him from his post. Such is the outcome of to-day's audience.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 21st.

As he is always asking questions about the usages of the old Court, where grace and urbanity reigned supreme, I often feel tempted to tell Napoleon that ladies at Court were wont to converse with the Sovereign. Here we are exactly like little girls going to be put through our catechism; if we were to speak to Napoleon, he would take it very ill. Half-reclining upon a sofa, he alone furnishes the conversation, for no one replies except by a timid "yes" or "no." He talks in quite a commonplace fashion about music and painting, often choosing love as a topic of conversation—and the Lord knows how he talks about this. It is not a woman's place to judge of a General, nor do I intend to

discuss his military achievements, but social wit—the wit of the *salon*—is certainly within our ken, and I may safely say that of this he has none whatever.

August 24th.

The Emperor usually plays at whist every evening with Josephine and Madame de la Rochefoucault, one of our number making a fourth. This evening the Duke d'Aremberg had to take a hand; the Emperor thought it rather a joke to play with a blind man. I was about to sit down to that tiresome lotto-table, when the First Chamberlain came to tell me that Napoleon wished me to take part in a game of whist. I replied that there was only one difficulty—viz., that I had never played in my life. M. de Rémusat communicated my answer to the Emperor, when he—to whom nothing is impossible—said, "That does not matter." It was a command, so I had to obey. Madame de la Rochefoucault, whose place I took, gave me a few hints, and I soon managed to play quite as well as the Empress and the Emperor.

August 25th.

M. de Sémonville is one of the latest victims of flagrant political injustice. When Ambassador at The Hague, he was instructed by M. de Talleyrand to take certain measures which appear to have displeased the Dutch. Bonaparte, who just now is manipulating them, will not admit that his Ambassador merely acted in accordance with M. de Talleyrand's instructions, as, in this case, he would have to sacrifice the latter. Though he detests Talleyrand, he thinks that he can make more use of him than of M. de Sémonville, who, accordingly, has to go. Such an action as this may possibly be excused on the plea that rules of justice, which, in the case of an individual, hold good, are inapplicable to sovereigns. But, on the contrary, I maintain that the acts of sovereigns belong to posterity, who shall judge of these when stripped of all the glamour of rank, and that potentates should ever be guided by principles of morality and justice.

Yesterday, at the reception of Ambassadors, when Bonaparte stood near M. de Sémonville he turned his back upon him without speaking, and when the latter asked, as a favour, to be received in private audience, this was refused. They know

all that he is going to say in justification, and are aware that he is blameless; that is just why they will not receive him. They cannot say to him, "You are right, and M. de Talleyrand is wrong; but you must pay for his mistake." Thus it is that, of his supreme wisdom, the Emperor has decided not to see him nor to hear what he has to say. How true is it that abuse of power is always allied to power, as effect is allied to cause!

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 26th.

I saw M. de Sémonville this morning. He told me that, when talking with him yesterday, M. de Talleyrand slily sought to persuade him to give orders at The Hague for all his papers to be burnt. "Be careful what you are about," said he; "the Emperor is a regular little Nero. Very likely he will have your papers seized, which might prove very unpleasant. Madame de Spare, your daughter-in-law, is at The Hague. Write and tell her to burn everything at once. It is more important than you think." Such advice as this, given in a friendly, solicitous way, might perhaps have been followed by a simpleton; but M. de Talleyrand had to do with one

who was quite as sharp as himself. M. de Sémonville at once saw through this move; it was to get him to destroy all documents which exonerated him. Instead of writing to Madame de Spare to burn his papers, he has sent one of his sons-in-law, M. de Montholon to fetch these, until whose return he will forbear to solicit any audience of the Emperor, waiting until he shall be armed with every proof. Yet I question if they will have any effect, unless it be that of putting Napoleon into a bad temper, should he consent to see the Ambassador, which I doubt.[1]

This evening my place in the drawing-room happened to be next to Madame Lannes.[2] It was the first time that I had seen her; she has arrived from Portugal with her husband, who was Ambassador there. To me she seemed charming. The Emperor, while promenading, stopped and said to her, in that extraordinary tone which he adopts towards all women, "They say that you were pretty thick with the Prince Regent of Portugal." Madame Lannes politely answered that the Prince had always treated her husband and herself with

1 M. de Sémonville eventually lost his appointment at the Embassy.

2 Afterwards Duchess de Montebello.

great kindness. Then, turning to me, she said, "I cannot think what fate it is that always places me right in front of the Emperor whenever he happens to be in a bad humour, for I don't think that he intends to say disagreeable things to me, and yet it so often happens that he does." The poor woman was almost in tears. So rude a speech was all the more inept because the Emperor is usually praised for his gallantry. That evening, however, Napoleon was infuriated with all women. He told us that we had no patriotism—no national spirit; that we ought to blush at wearing muslin; that Englishwomen had set us the example by only wearing goods manufactured in their own country; that this mania for English muslins was all the more singular, seeing that in France we had batistes that could replace these and serve as material for far prettier gowns; that, for his own part, he should always prefer batiste to anything else, as, when he was young, his first sweetheart wore a dress of that stuff, &c., &c. The expression "first sweetheart" nearly made me laugh, and I had the greatest difficulty in not doing so, especially as my eyes met those of Madame de la Rochefoucault, who was dying to explode also. It is extraordinary that Bonaparte

should have such vulgar manners. When he wants to be dignified, he is merely insolent and disdainful; and if he ever has a moment of gaiety, he becomes quite unutterably vulgar. His brother-in-law, Murat, sprung from a class far inferior to his own, and, wholly uneducated, has rapidly become schooled in the usages of society in the most astonishing way. At Dijon, I once met him at dinner at General Canclaux's, and I thought he looked like a private dressed in an officer's uniform. I saw him lately, and was struck by his polished, and even agreeable, manners. Napoleon, however, is far too arrogant ever to acquire such manners; he has too much veneration for himself ever to examine himself, and too much contempt for human beings ever to imagine for a moment that there could be anybody better than himself.

CHAPTER XXI

DIARY OF THE JOURNEY TO MAYENCE.

PART THE SECOND.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 28th.

The Duke and Duchess Leopold of Bavaria, Prince Pius, their son, and Princess Elizabeth, their daughter, have arrived. They have just taken possession of Düsseldorf, which as an indemnity falls to their share. The Duchess must have been a very handsome woman; she has a fine figure and a distinguished air. Prince Pius is just at that awkward age of hobbledehoydom—neither man nor boy. The Emperor was greatly amused at his little legs, that can hardly support his puny body, which is smothered in orders and decorations; in truth, a droll caricature. The Princess Elizabeth is not pretty, but, if better dressed, she would show to greater advantage. She is extremely well-bred, and has plenty to say, at which Napoleon is scandalised. At dinner she sat between him and Eugene de Beau-

harnais; being used to her father's little Court, it was hardly likely that she should be shy at speaking to Napoleon. He thinks it very odd that she should not wait to be spoken to, as all the members of his Court usually do. I also saw that he took very little notice of her, as if to punish her for not being afraid of him; but Eugene, who is so well-bred, was, as always, the perfection of courtesy.

Cologne, August 31st.

We have left Aix-la-Chapelle, and the day before yesterday reached Cologne, a dull sort of place. I hope that we shall only stay a few days. An erroneous impression—which, as I noticed, prevailed at Aix-la-Chapelle, but more particularly here—is the vulgar one that Napoleon hardly ever sleeps and is perpetually at work. But I notice that if he gets up early to review a regiment, he is particularly careful to go to bed all the sooner at night-time. Yesterday, for instance, he was in the saddle at five o'clock a.m., and in the evening he withdrew to his room before nine o'clock, and Josephine informed us that he had gone to bed. It was also stated that he made an immoderate use of coffee in order to

stave off sleep, but he only takes a cup after lunch, and again after dinner. The public, however, is always like that; if a man, placed in fortunate circumstances, achieves great things, everything is always set down to genius. We are loth to allow that anything is due to the force of chance; such an admission is distasteful to our self-respect. Our imagination has conjured up a phantom, which we surround with a glittering halo; but if we inspect it closer, all the glamour vanishes—the man appears in all his frailty, all his petty meanness, and we are wrath with ourselves for having worshipped him thus.

Cologne, September 1st.

This morning I was chatting with Josephine while they were dressing her hair. The Emperor came in, and turned the whole place topsy-turvy while getting her to try on various *parures*. Madame Saint-Hilaire, First Lady of the Bed-chamber, who is in charge of the jewels, looked a perfect sight while Bonaparte was rummaging about and overhauling the articles entrusted to her care.

This mania for interfering with female dress is certainly most extraordinary in a man who has

charge (I was going to say) of the destinies of the world. This is so well-known, that Herbaut, Josephine's *valet-de-chambre*, told me one day that I had put my tiara on awry, and the Emperor liked these put on perfectly straight. I laughed at this remark, and said that I should wear my head-dress just as it suited me, merely consulting my own taste in the matter. Herbaut seemed much astonished, assuring me that all the Court ladies were careful to comply with that of Napoleon. Such attention, indeed, does he pay to details of this sort, that one day, when there was a grand ceremony, as Josephine appeared in a pink and silver gown which he did not like, he threw his writing-desk violently at her, which obliged her to change her dress. Here we do nothing else but change our gowns: one for lunch, another for going to the play, another for dinner, and another for a ball afterwards. Such employment as this is a regular penance for me.

Cologne, September 2nd.

The Emperor has a marked aversion to what are called clever women; he deems us only fit to

decorate a drawing-room. I really don't think he finds much difference between a fine vase of flowers and a pretty woman. If he concerns himself with their toilette, it is because of his care for sumptuous furniture. In his eyes, a Court lady is merely a piece of furniture to adorn his apartment; he praises or blames her gown as he would the covering of an arm-chair. Josephine once humorously remarked that it was only about five or six times a year that women could influence him; on all other days they were nothing, or next to nothing, to him. This evening the conversation turned upon the Queen of Prussia; he cannot abide her, and does not scruple to let people know this. Monarchs are just like lovers; if they happen to fall out, each says the most horrible things of the other. When at war, they ought to remember that they will end by making peace, and that, albeit there is a mutual surrender of the fortresses captured, they cannot do away with the hard things they have said about each other. I find that the method, so much in vogue at present, of filling the papers with columns of abuse, sorts well with Napoleon's character and his upstart dynasty, for, on reading history, it would seem that formerly, among sovereigns, a tone of moderation prevailed which to-day does not exist.

Bonn, September 5th.

We left Cologne this morning. For a long time I have not spent such a pleasant evening as this one. The Empress was entertained by M. de Belderbuch, who has a charming house; the garden, which was illuminated, extends to the banks of the Rhine, that in this part is very broad. The musicians were stationed in a boat on the river. While the fireworks were being let off, after supper, I slipped out into the garden by myself and walked down to the banks of the Rhine. I felt a longing to escape from the constraint which weighed so heavily upon me. The air was pure and calm; by degrees everybody left the garden. Sweet, harmonious music was then heard, which soon ceased, and the profound silence was only broken by the waves dashing against the rocks on which I was standing. The moon, reflected in the stream, now replaced the flaring lights in the garden, and bathed the whole landscape in its tender, dreamy light. I can hardly express the effect of the whole scene; it was as if I were listening to some concert of celestial spirits, as the distant harmonies floated across the Rhine to me upon the soft night wind.

Coblentz, September 10th.

It appears that last night Napoleon had a violent attack of epilepsy, to which he is subject. He had been suffering a good while before Josephine (who occupies the same room) ventured to call for help; but at last she was obliged to do so. Roustan, who always lies outside the Emperor's door, was so fast asleep that she could not wake him. The Prefect's apartment is so devoid of luxury, that one does not even find articles of common necessity. There was not even a bell; the valet's rooms were a long way off, and Josephine, half-naked, was obliged to open the aide-de-camp's door in order to get a light. General Rapp, somewhat surprised at this nocturnal visit, gave her one, and after a while the Emperor's fit passed off. Napoleon has forbidden Josephine to say a single word about it; and she has imposed secrecy upon upon all to whom she told the occurrence this morning. The Emperor looked very pale and tired this evening, yet nobody ventured to ask after his health, for each knows that he would incur disgrace did he dare to suppose that the Emperor was subject to any human infirmity.[1]

1 The Emperor was never subject to epileptic fits. This is only one more of the many fabulous tales told about him. The reason for this may be seen in the portrait which I have drawn of the Emperor.—NOTE BY CONSTANT.

Mayence, September 28th.

To-day Napoleon, before forty people, said to Madame Lorges, whose husband commands the division, "Oh, madam, what a horrible gown you have got on! It's just like an old bit of tapestry. Regular German taste, I should say!" Madame Lorges is a German. I don't know if the dress was in German taste, but I am pretty certain that such a compliment was not in French taste.

Mayence, September 29th.

This evening, while chatting with two other persons in the corner of the drawing-room, I do not know how I was led to mention that Emperor of China who asked Confucius what folk said about him and his government. "No one says anything," replied the philosopher; "everyone is silent." "That is as I wish," rejoined the Emperor. Napoleon, who was close to me, talking to the Prince d'Issembourg, turned sharply round. If I live for a thousand years I shall never forget the menacing glance that he gave me. I was in no way disconcerted, but went on talking, saying that this Emperor of China, and many another of that ilk, were like

owlets who hoot if light be brought to their nest. I cannot tell if Napoleon grasped the meaning of this last remark, but probably he felt that he had made a mistake in appearing to apply the story about the Chinese Emperor to himself; and his face assumed that immobile, expressionless look which he can put on when he likes.

October 1*st*, 1804.

We left Mayence yesterday to return to Paris, which we shall reach in a few days. The local authorities in all the different places that we have visited seem to have been at incredible pains to compose addresses; yet verily all is labour lost, for, as I notice, they are all exactly alike. From that delivered by the Mayor of some obscure German village, to that declaimed by the President of the Senate, the substance could all be summed up in the lines of the fable, where the Fox says to the Lion:

> "Vous leur fîtes, seigneur,
> En les croquant, beaucoup d'honneur."

CHAPTER XXII

Portrait of the Emperor—His personal characteristics—His way of eating—His favourite dishes—His liking for coffee—Popular errors regarding this—Story about Marshal Augereau—Distressing result of eating too fast—Josephine and Constant as the Emperor's nurses—The Emperor a bad patient—His hour of rising—His familiarity with Constant—The early cup of tea—His bath—His toilet—His hour for going to bed—The swift way in which he undressed—His passion for bathing—Talleyrand asleep in the Emperor's room—Constant gets his ears pulled.

No detail concerning the lives of great men deserves to be regarded as insignificant. Posterity has ever shown itself eager to know the very slightest facts regarding their way of life, their likes, dislikes, habits and customs. When I used to go to the theatre, either in some brief period of leisure or as part of His Majesty's suite, I noticed how much the audience liked to see some famous historical personage presented on the stage, with every detail perfect as to his dress, gait, bearing, and even to his physical infirmities and defects, as described by

contemporaries. For myself, I always enjoyed such living portraits of famous men. Thus, I recollect that no play ever gave me as much pleasure as a charming piece which I saw acted, entitled *The Two Pages*. Fleury, who took the part of Frederic the Great, gave such an exact imitation of the monarch's slow walk, dry voice, abrupt gestures, and even of his short-sightedness, that when he came upon the stage the whole house received him with a loud burst of applause. By those competent to judge, it was pronounced the most absolutely perfect impersonation. As for myself, I cannot say if the resemblance was exact; but I felt as if it needs must be so. Michelot, whom I subsequently saw in this part, gave me no less pleasure than his predecessor. Doubtless these two clever actors had gone to infinite pains in order to make a study exact in every little detail of their original. Let me admit that I feel a certain pride in thinking that these Memoirs of mine may give my readers something akin to the pleasure which I got from the actors' art, and that at a future period —distant as yet, but which is sure to come—the artist who would represent in faithful style the greatest man of the age, will be obliged to be guided by the portrait which I, better than anyone else, have been able to draw from Nature. Nor do I

imagine that such a portrait has ever been drawn before; at least, not with such wealth of detail.

On his return from Egypt, the Emperor was very thin and very sallow, his complexion being copper-coloured, and his eyes deep-set and perfect in shape. Excellent, as I thought, was the portrait of the Emperor done by Horace Vernet in his picture "A Review by the First Consul in the Place du Carrousel." His brow was very broad and open; he had little hair, especially about the temples; what there was was very fine and thin. It was chestnut-coloured; and he had fine blue eyes that, in incredible fashion, depicted the divers emotions which stirred him, being sometimes extremely sweet and caressing, and anon wearing a severe, harsh expression. He had a very handsome mouth, with even lips, that were slightly compressed, especially if he was in a bad humour. Without being regular, his teeth were very white and very good, nor did he ever complain of toothache. Grecian in shape, his nose was faultless, and his sense of smell intensely acute. In short, all the features of his face were of regular comeliness. Yet, at that time, he was so extremely thin that one did not notice how handsome were his features; indeed, the effect of his physiognomy was hardly

an agreeable one. One had to take his features one by one, and then put them together again, in order to appreciate the perfectly regular beauty of the whole. His head was very large, being twenty-two inches in circumference, long rather than broad, and, consequently, somewhat flat about the temples; it was extremely sensitive, and I used to put wadding in his hats, and keep them some days in my room to make them softer. His ears were small, well set on, and perfectly shaped. The Emperor's feet were very tender; I used to let his shoes be first worn by a valet named Joseph, whose foot was exactly the same size as the Emperor's.

In height he was five feet two and a quarter; his neck was rather short; he had stooping shoulders and a broad chest, with very little hair upon it; and shapely thighs and legs. His foot was small, the toes being symmetrical and entirely free from corns or bunions; his arms were well made and well put on; his hands and nails admirable in shape; indeed, of his whole person he took the utmost care, yet without being dandified. He often used to bite his nails, but only slightly; it was a sign of his being impatient or preoccupied.

Later on, he grew much stouter, yet without losing anything of his comely shape; on the con-

trary, during the Empire he was handsomer than during the Consulate; his skin became very white and his complexion fresh-coloured.

During his moments, or rather, his long hours, of work and meditation, the Emperor had a curious habit of involuntarily shrugging his right shoulder in a rapid, nervous way, and this habit he had all his life, so that persons who did not know it took it for a sign of discontent or disapproval, anxiously wondering why and how they had managed to displease him. He never thought of what he was doing, but went on shrugging his shoulders unconsciously.

One notable peculiarity about the Emperor was that he could never feel his heart beat. He often said this to M. Corvisart as well as to me, and more than once he made us place our hands on his chest, when we never could detect the slightest pulsation.

The Emperor used to eat very fast; he hardly remained twelve minutes at table. When he had finished dinner he got up and went into the drawing-room; but the Empress remained at table, and motioned her guests to do likewise. Sometimes, however, she used to follow His Majesty, and then, no doubt, the Court ladies had to make

amends in their own apartments, where anything they liked was served to them.

One day Prince Eugene rose from table immediately after the Emperor, who, turning round, said, "But you have not had time to get any dinner, Eugene?" "Pardon me," replied the Prince; "I dined beforehand." Other guests likewise discovered that this was not a wholly useless precaution.

It was during the pre-consular period that things were like this, for afterwards Napoleon, even when still only First Consul, used to dine alone with the Empress, except on such occasions as he invited one or two members of his household to join them, a favour that each and all gladly accepted. At this epoch there was already a Court.

The Emperor usually lunched alone at a little mahogany table, without a napkin. This meal—a shorter one than the other—lasted from eight to ten minutes.

I shall presently mention the ill-effects which this habit of eating so fast had upon the Emperor's health. Moreover, as a result of such hastiness, he was far from being a cleanly eater. Instead of a fork or a spoon, he was always ready to use his fingers; care being taken to place his favourite

dish close to him. To this he helped himself in the way described, sopping his bread in the sauce or the gravy—a proceeding which did not prevent the dish from going round, and there were few who did not venture to partake of it. Some, indeed, as I remarked, thought that by so strange an act of heroism they would ingratiate themselves with the Emperor. I would fain suppose that it was their admiration for His Majesty which quite overcame their repugnance—just as one does not mind eating off the same plate or drinking out of the same glass of somebody one loves, though that somebody be not over-cleanly. This, however, one does not notice, since love is blind.

The Emperor's favourite dish was a fricassee of chicken, which, in honour of the conqueror of Italy, was styled *poulet à la Marengo;* he was also fond of haricot beans, lentils, cutlets, roast mutton, and roast chicken. The simplest dishes were those that he liked best; all that he was particular about was the quality of his bread. It is not true, as some have stated, that the Emperor made an immoderate use of coffee. He only took a small cup of this after luncheon and after dinner. Sometimes, however, if preoccupied, it might happen that he took two cups in succession. So much coffee as this ex-

cited his nerves and prevented him from sleeping; often, too, he used to take it cold, either very sweet or without any sugar at all. To prevent all this, the Empress Josephine made a point of pouring out the Emperor's coffee herself, a practice which the Empress Marie Louise also adopted. When, having risen from table, the Emperor adjourned to the little parlour, a page followed, carrying an enamelled tray, with a coffee-pot, sugar-basin and cup. The Empress herself used to pour out the coffee, put sugar in, and taste it before offering it to the Emperor.

The Emperor never drank anything but Chambertin, though he rarely took this plain. He did not care for wine, of which he was no judge. That reminds me how once, at Boulogne camp, when several officers had been invited to dinner, the Emperor offered some of his wine to Marshal Augereau, and, with an air of satisfaction, asked him what he thought of it. The Marshal smacked his lips for a good while, and at length said, in no very flattering tone, "There's better stuff than this to be had." The Emperor, who had expected a different answer, smiled, as did all his guests, at the Marshal's candour.

Everyone has heard of the extreme precautions

taken by His Majesty to avoid being poisoned. The tale, however, is one of those to be classed with that of the bullet-proof cuirass which he was always supposed to wear. On the contrary, the Emperor was far too unsuspecting. His lunch was brought, every day, into an ante-chamber, to which everybody had access, and where those whom he was to receive in private audience waited for hours together. His lunch also waited a good while, too, the dishes being kept as hot as possible until he came out of his study and sat down to table. Dinner for Their Majesties was taken up, in covered dishes, to their apartments, and into these it would not have been difficult, surreptitiously, to put poison; yet an attempt of this sort never entered the heads of any of the Royal servants, whose devotion and fidelity to the Emperor, from the highest to the very lowest, surpasses description.

The Emperor's habit of bolting his food occasionally brought on violent pains in the stomach, followed by vomiting. Once a groom of the chamber came to me in a great hurry to say that the Emperor wanted me immediately; that his dinner had disagreed with him and he was in great pain. Hastening to the Emperor's room, I found him stretched at full length upon the floor; this

was his way when he felt upset. The Empress Josephine sat beside him; his head was in her lap. He was yawning and swearing alternately, for the Emperor bore this sort of inconvenience far less bravely than the thousand ills that martial life brings in its wake. Thus the hero of Arcola, who had fearlessly risked his life in a hundred battles, now seemed utterly prostrated by a mere stomach-ache. The Empress did her best to comfort and soothe him; and when I came in, she said, "Constant, make haste, the Emperor wants you! Make him some tea, and don't go till he is better." As soon as His Majesty had drunk three cups, the pain grew less. He still lay with his head in the Empress's lap. She kept stroking his forehead with her dimpled white hand and chafing his chest, as she murmured, "Do you feel better? Would you like to lie down? I will stop by your bedside with Constant?" I and Constant! Touching, was it not, such tenderness and such condescension on the part of one so exalted in rank?

As an intimate servant, I often was in a position to witness such charming domestic scenes.

While on the subject of the Emperor's ailments, I will say a few words about the most serious illness that he ever had, except that which caused his death.

At the siege of Toulon, in 1793, when the Emperor was still only a colonel of artillery, a gunner was killed at his post, when "Colonel" Bonaparte at once took his place and fired the gun several times. The luckless artilleryman had been suffering from scurvy of the most malignant type, and the Emperor was infected. He only got cured several years afterwards, and doctors were of opinion that neglect of this malady accounted for his extreme emaciation and sallow, bilious look. At the Tuileries he took sulphur baths, and for a while wore a blister. Up to then, he had always refused to try any remedy, being too busy, so he said. M. Corvisart strongly insisted upon cautery, but the Emperor, anxious to keep the shape of his arm intact, would not hear of this.

His Majesty had an invincible repugnance for all medicines, and, if he ever took any (a rare occurrence), it was generally chicken-broth, chicory-water, or salts of tartar. M. Corvisart advised him to reject any beverage that had a bitter, disagreeable taste; I think this was because he feared that someone might try to poison his illustrious patient.

No matter at what hour the Emperor retired to rest, I always went into his room between seven and eight in the morning. His first ques-

tions, as I have stated, were invariably regarding the time and the weather. Sometimes he complained to me of looking poorly. When this was the case I admitted the fact, just as I said "No" if I did not think so; whereupon he would pull my ears and laughingly call me a "big booby," asking for a mirror, and saying that he had only tried to take me in, as he was quite well. He then took his newspapers and asked the names of those waiting in the ante-chamber, mentioning whom he wished to see, and chatting first with one and then with another. When M. Corvisart came, he did not wait for a summons, but walked straight in. The Emperor liked to tease him about medicine, saying that as an art it was purely conjectural, and that doctors were charlatans, adducing proof of this—notably his own experience. When he believed himself to be in the right, the doctor never gave in.

While such talk went on, the Emperor used to shave himself, as I finally succeeded in persuading him to do. He often forgot that he had only shaved one side of his face, when I would tell him of this; whereat he laughed and proceeded to complete the operation. M. Yvan, surgeon-in-ordinary, as well as M. Corvisart, came in for a good

share of the Emperor's gibes at doctors and doctoring. Such disputes were vastly amusing; the Emperor grew right merry and quite talkative. If he had no handy case in point to prove his assertions, I am sure he never scrupled to invent one. Nor did the medical gentlemen accept all that he told them as gospel. One day, in accordance with his singular habit, the Emperor pulled the ear of one of his physicians (M. Hallé, I think it was). The doctor abruptly drew back and exclaimed, "Oh! Sire, you hurt me!" Perhaps there was a touch of irritation in this speech; possibly, too, the doctor was right. Anyhow, from that time forward, his ears were never in danger.

Sometimes, before calling in the other servants, His Majesty questioned me about what I had been doing the day before. He asked if I had dined in town, and with whom; if I had been cordially received, and what we had had for dinner. Often, too, he wanted to know how much some part of my dress had cost; and when I told him, he would exclaim at the price, saying that when he was a sub-lieutenant everything was far cheaper, and that he had often dined at Rose's (a restaurant-keeper of that day), where he got an excellent dinner for eightpence. He often spoke of my family, and of

my sister, who, previous to the Revolution, had been a nun, but was obliged to leave her convent. One day he asked me if she had a pension, and how much this was. I told him, adding that it was hardly sufficient for her needs, so that both my mother and myself allowed her something. His Majesty told me to apply to the Duke de Bassano, who should report upon the matter, as he desired to be kind to my family. I did not take advantage of His Majesty's good-nature, being then in sufficiently easy circumstances to give my relatives help. I never thought of the future, which, seemingly, would bring no change in my position; and I scrupled to let my family be maintained at the expense of the State. I admit that, later on, I regretted such excessive delicacy, having noticed that very few people of higher or lower station than myself cared to set a similar example.

On rising, the Emperor always took a cup of tea or orange-flower water. If he had a bath, it was immediately he got out of bed, and while there his secretary (M. de Bourrienne did this till 1804) used to read his despatches and journals. If he did not take a bath, he sat by the fireside while such reading went on; not infrequently he went through the papers himself. Then he dictated replies and re-

marks to his secretary, and when all his correspondence and papers had been examined, he flung them all in a heap on the floor. They were afterwards collected by his secretary, who, after arranging them, placed them all in the Emperor's private study.

Before completing his toilet, the Emperor used to wear white duck pants, and a dressing-gown of the same material. In winter he wore a similar costume, only of thick cotton. He wore a handkerchief twisted round his head, the two ends hanging down behind. Every night the Emperor himself put on this most becoming head-dress. Another handkerchief was given to him on leaving the bath, his always being soaked through with his ablutions, as he splashed about in the bath the whole time. When this was over, and he had read his despatches, he began to dress. I used to shave him before he knew how to shave himself. When the Emperor had learnt how to do this, he first used a mirror fixed to the window; but he got so close to it, and lathered himself so roughly, that the mirror, window panes, curtains, toilet-table, and the Emperor himself were smothered in soap-suds. To remedy this, all his servants took counsel together, when it was decided that Roustan should hold up the mirror for His Majesty. When the Emperor

had shaved one side of his face, he turned the other side to the light, making Roustan move from left to right, or *vice versâ*. The toilet-table also had to be moved away. When he had done shaving, the Emperor washed his face and hands, and carefully trimmed his nails. Then I took off his flannel waistcoat and shirt, and rubbed his body all over with a soft brush. Then I gave him a friction of eau-de-Cologne, of which he used a great quantity, as every day he was rubbed like this. This health-giving practice he learnt in the East. It used to do him a great deal of good, being, in fact, excellent. I then put on his thin list slippers, white silk stockings (he never wore others), very thin drawers, and kerseymere breeches and tops, or else tight-fitting trousers of the same stuff, and little boots, worn half-way up the calf, in English fashion. On these were small silver spurs; indeed, he wore spurs on all his boots. Then I put on his flannel jersey and shirt, a very thin muslin tie over a black silk stock, a waistcoat of white piqué, and then either a hunting-coat or a grenadier's uniform—generally the former. When his toilet was completed, I gave him his handkerchief, snuff-box, and another little tortoise-shell box containing small pieces of liquorice. From the foregoing, it will be seen that the Emperor had to be

dressed from head to foot; he never touched a thing, but let himself be dressed like a child, attending all the while to his business matters. I forgot to say that he used a boxwood tooth-pick, and a tooth-brush dipped in opiate dentifrice.

The Emperor, so to speak, was born to have a valet. When only a general he had as many as three, and required as much waiting on as when at the height of his fortune. From that time onward he always needed all the attentions I have just named, and it was almost impossible for him to do without them. Etiquette made no change in this respect; it increased the number of his attendants, and gave these new titles, but it could not augment the care and attention which he received. He rarely submitted to the full Royal etiquette—for instance, the Grand Chamberlain never handed him his shirt; once only—at the coronation ceremony—he presented him with basin and towel.

The Emperor had no fixed time for going to bed; sometimes he retired at ten or eleven o'clock, but more often he sat up till two, three and four in the morning. He was soon undressed, for, on entering his room, he used to fling his clothes off anyhow, throwing his coat and grand cordon on the floor, his watch on the bed, his hat on to

a chair—scattering them in all directions. When in a good-humour, he used to call out for me in a loud voice, crying, "Ohé! oh! oh!" At other times, when put out, he would exclaim, "Monsieur! Monsieur Constant!" Always, at all times of the year, he had to have his bed warmed; it was only during intensely hot weather that he dispensed with this. Owing to this habit of undressing so quickly, I often had nothing else to do but give him his handkerchief for his head; then I lighted his enamelled night-light, which was shaded so as not to be too bright. If he did not go to sleep at once, he would send for one of his secretaries or the Empress Josephine to read to him. No one acquitted herself of this task better than the Empress—in fact, he preferred her to all other readers; she read with that charm peculiar to her every action. By order of the Emperor, aloe-wood and other perfumes were burnt in his bedroom, besides sugar and vinegar. A fire was lighted in his apartment nearly all the year round; he was always very sensitive to cold. When he wished to sleep, I took away his light and went upstairs to my room, which was immediately over His Majesty's. Roustan and another valet slept in a little room adjoining the Emperor's. If he wanted me during the night,

a footman, who slept in the ante-chamber, used to fetch me. Night and day hot water was always kept ready for his bath, for often, at any hour of the night or of the day, he suddenly would feel inclined to have one. Every morning and every evening, when the Emperor got up or went to bed, M. Yvan, the surgeon, put in an appearance.

The Emperor, as we know, used often to send for his secretaries, and even for his ministers, in the middle of the night. During his stay at Warsaw in 1806, M. de Talleyrand once received a message after midnight. The Emperor wished to see him, and he at once obeyed the summons. They worked until the small hours, and His Majesty, worn out, fell fast asleep. Talleyrand, afraid to wake the Emperor by going out, and thinking that he might be wanted again, lay down on a sofa; and very soon he was in the land of dreams also. M. Meneval, secretary to His Majesty, would not go to bed until Talleyrand had left, as the Emperor might need his services after the Minister had withdrawn; so long an audience as this made him fidgety. I myself was in none of the best of humours, since it was impossible for me to retire until I had first removed the light in His Majesty's room. M. Meneval came a dozen times to me to know if M. de

Talleyrand had gone. "He's still there, I am certain," said I; "and yet I cannot hear anything." Two o'clock struck, then three, then four, yet nobody appeared; no sound, no stir in His Majesty's room. At length, losing patience, I opened the door as gently as possible, when the Emperor, who was a very light sleeper, started up and called out, "Who's there? Who goes there? What is it?" I replied that, believing that M. de Talleyrand had gone, I was about to remove the light. "Talleyrand! Talleyrand!" cried the Emperor, "where is he?" Then seeing him wake up, he jocularly added, "I do believe that he is asleep! Oh, you rogue! How dare you go to sleep in my room! Ha! ha!" I went off without taking away the light, and they fell to talking again, while M. Meneval and I had to sit up and wait for them until five o'clock in the morning.

When working thus at night, the Emperor at first used to take coffee with cream, or chocolate; but he afterwards gave this up, and during the Empire took nothing, except, occasionally, a little punch, made weak and sweet like lemonade, or else an infusion of orange-flower, or tea, such as I brought him every morning when he rose.

The Emperor, who gave such splendid presents to his officers, who was so generous to his soldiers,

and to whom France owes so many handsome monuments, was very close, in fact, positively stingy as regarded the members of his household, hardly ever giving anything to his servants. Even such a festival as New Year's Day failed to loosen his purse-strings. "Well, M. Constant," he would say, as he pinched my ear, "what are you going to give me as a Christmas-box?" I replied that I would give him whatever he liked, though inwardly I certainly hoped that it was not I who, next day, had to give a present. Such a thing seemingly never entered his head; no one had cause to thank him for gifts of any sort, and to this little rule of domestic economy he never once made an exception. With regard to the ear-pinching, of which I have often made mention, let me say, once for all, that one is completely wrong in supposing that he was content to give a gentle nip; on the contrary, he used to pinch very hard, and the harder the pinch the better his humour. Sometimes when I came in to dress him, he would rush up to me like a madman with his favourite greeting of "Hullo! you rascal!" and pinch both my ears at once, making me scream. Not infrequently he added sundry slaps, adroitly applied, whereupon I was sure to find him excellently good-tempered for the whole day—considerate and charming as he alone

could be. Roustan, and even Marshal Berthier, came in for their fair share of such Imperial caresses; I often saw them with flaming cheeks, and eyes well-nigh filled with tears.

CHAPTER XXIII

Sum fixed by the Emperor for his toilette—The Emperor's economy—Constant's carriage suppressed by the Master of the Horse—The Emperor orders this to be given back to him—The Emperor's way with books—His favourite horses—The Emperor as a sportsman—His fondness for the theatre—His use of tobacco—His snuff-boxes—Constant gives him his first and last lesson in smoking a pipe—The Emperor's clothes—His decorations—The Austerlitz sword.

TWENTY thousand francs was the sum fixed for His Majesty's toilette, and in the coronation year he became greatly incensed because this amount had been considerably exceeded. It was always in fear and trembling that the various budgets of his household expenses were presented to him. He was always for cutting these down; always grumbling, and advising all sorts of reforms. I remember that, when asking him for a place for somebody, worth three thousand francs, which he granted me, he cried out, "Three thousand francs! Why, do you know that that's equal to the revenue of one of my estates? When I was a sub-lieutenant I did not spend as much as that!" This became a regular

catch-word with the Emperor when admonishing those of his intimate acquaintance. "When I had the honour of being a sub-lieutenant!" was for ever on his lips, and always when preaching economy to his subordinates.

By the way, with regard to the presentation of budgets, I remember a circumstance which deserves recording in these Memoirs, being a purely personal one, and illustrative of His Majesty's ideas as to economy. One day, the Emperor, on looking over the accounts for stabling and horses, was much shocked at the expense, and struck out a considerable sum. The Master of the Horse, in order to comply with the rules of economy, deprived several members of the Imperial household of their carriages, mine included. Some days afterwards, the Emperor entrusted me with a commission, to execute which a conveyance was necessary. I told him that, not having my carriage, as formerly, I feared I could not obey his behest. Then he exclaimed that economy of that sort was not what he meant; that M. de Caulaincourt had a very imperfect conception of economy, and that, when he saw him, he would tell him that he desired nothing appertaining to myself to be touched.

Occasionally, in the morning, the Emperor used

to read a new novel, or the last fashionable romance. If a tale displeased him, he flung it into the fire. Yet it is not fair to assume that all the books thus burnt were bad ones. If the author was not a favourite of his, or if the writer spoke over-well of foreigners, this was quite sufficient to ensure the volume's prompt cremation. I myself saw His Majesty hurl Madame de Staël's "Allemagne" into the fire. If he found us reading in the little room, while waiting for him to go to bed, he used to look at the books in our hands, and if these happened to be novels they were ruthlessly burnt. His Majesty rarely refrained from adding a little homily as well, asking the culprit whether a man could not find something better than that to read. One morning he had flung a tale of some sort into the flames, and Roustan stooped down to rescue it, when the Emperor prevented him, saying, "Let the filth burn; that's all it's fit for."

The Emperor was not a graceful horseman, nor do I think that he would have had a firm seat if great care had not always been taken to provide him with a horse that was thoroughly broken in. To this end all sorts of precautions were taken. The horses intended for the Emperor's personal use had to undergo a very rough training before they had the

honour of carrying him. They were taught to bear pain without even wincing, being struck repeatedly over the head and the ears with a whip. Pistols and maroon rockets were let off in their ears; drums were beaten and flags were waved close to their eyes, while heavy obstacles—sometimes live sheep and pigs—were flung under their hoofs. In the middle of the fastest gallop the Emperor liked to pull his horse up short, so all his mounts had to be trained accordingly. In a word, they had to be thoroughly broken in. Jardin *père*, His Majesty's head groom, discharged this difficult task with much ability and address; the Emperor, in fact, set great store by him.

His Majesty always made a point of having the handsomest horses he could get, and during the last years of his reign he only rode Arabs. Styria was one of his pet mounts; he rode her at Saint-Bernard and at Marengo, after which latter campaign he desired his favourite to end her days in peace. Indeed, to have gone through Saint-Bernard and the grand battle of Marengo was in itself no mean record. For some years, too, the Emperor had an Arab horse of rare instinct, of which he was very fond. All the while it was waiting for its rider, it did not seem at all grace-

ful, but directly the drums beat to announce the Emperor's coming, it drew itself up proudly, shook its mane and pawed the ground with its foot, and so long as the Emperor was in the saddle, it looked the handsomest steed imaginable. His Majesty was particular as to his grooms, nor was the training of his pages neglected in any respect. They were taught to acquire a firm, graceful seat; some of their equestrian feats would have been more suitable at a circus. Indeed, it was one of Franconi's ring-masters who had the teaching of the pages.

As stated elsewhere, the Emperor liked hunting and sport only so far as it was in conformity with Royal custom. Yet I have seen him go in for it with such zest as would make one believe that it did not bore him. One day he hunted in the Rambouillet Forest from six in the morning till eight at night; a stag was the cause of this unusual excursion, and I remember that he came back without having run it to ground. At one of the Imperial meets at Rambouillet, the Empress Josephine being present, a stag, to escape its pursuers, rushed under the Empress's carriage. Such shelter did not prove treacherous, for Her Majesty, moved to pity at the poor animal's terror, besought the Emperor

to let it go free. So the stag was set at liberty, and kind-hearted Josephine herself put a silver collar round its neck as proof of its deliverance, and as a safeguard against other sportsmen.

One of the Empress's ladies-in-waiting, however, did not show herself so tender-hearted; and her callous reply to the Emperor proved singularly displeasing to him, who in women prized gentleness and sympathy. For some hours they had been hunting in the Bois de Boulogne. The Emperor approached the Empress's carriage, and began talking to the lady in question, who bore one of the oldest and noblest names of France, and who, without wishing it, had been placed beside the Empress. The Prince of Neuchâtel came up to say that the stag had been brought to bay. "Madam," quoth the Emperor, gallantly, to Madame de C., "what is your pleasure that we do to the stag? I place its fate in your hands." "Do what you like with it, Sire," was her answer; "I am not the least interested in it." The Emperor stared coldly at her, and said to the Master of the Hunt, "As the stag is so unfortunate as not to interest Madame de C., it does not deserve to live; so let it be killed." Hereupon the Emperor turned his horse's head and rode off. He was shocked at the lady's

unfeeling reply, and he repeated it to others that evening, after the hunt was over, in terms by no means flattering to Madame de C.

In the "Memorials of Saint-Helena" it is affirmed that the Emperor, while out hunting, was knocked down and hurt by a wild boar, receiving a serious injury to one of his fingers. I never saw such a thing happen, nor did I ever hear that such an accident had befallen His Majesty.

The Emperor had an awkward way of holding his gun, usually loading this with a big charge, so that, as he did not keep it firmly planted against his shoulder, the rifle kicked and bruised his arm till it was black and blue. I used to rub the contused part with eau-de-Cologne, and then His Majesty thought no more about it.

On one occasion, the Emperor tried hunting with the falcon on the Rambouillet plains; but the essay was scarcely a success, nor did he care to repeat it.

His Majesty was very fond of the play, and showed marked preference for French tragedy and Italian opera. Corneille was his favourite author. I often used to see the works of this great poet lying on his table; and often I have heard the Emperor, while pacing up and down his room,

declaim lines from *Cinna*, or from *La Mort de César*. Often, too, comedies were played, much to the delight of all the members of the Imperial household, and the Emperor himself enjoyed the fun as much as anybody. Lots of times I have seen him doubled up with laughter at Baptiste *cadet* in *Les Héritiers*. Michaut also amused him immensely in the *Partie de Chasse de Henri IV*.

It is said that the Emperor took quantities of snuff, and that, to do so quicker and oftener, he had this put in a leather-lined waistcoat pocket. Such statements are altogether erroneous. The Emperor never took snuff except out of snuff-boxes, and though in the main he consumed a good deal, he only took a very little at a time, merely putting a pinch to his nostrils just to sniff it, and then letting it fall. True, the place where he stood was covered with snuff, but his handkerchiefs—infallible as evidence herein—were scarcely stained at all, though they were white and of very fine cambric. They certainly bore no marks of the confirmed snuff-taker. He often was content to hold the open box to his nose and just smell the snuff. His snuff-boxes were narrow, oval ones, made of tortoise-shell, gold-mounted, with cameos or antique gold and silver medallions upon them. He used to have

round snuff-boxes, but as it required both hands to open these, and as this operation often resulted in his either dropping the box or spilling its contents, he grew disgusted with them. He always used very coarse snuff—usually a mixture of various kinds; with some of this, for fun, he used to feed the gazelles which he had at Saint-Cloud. They relished it immensely, and, though shy of everybody else, always fearlessly approached His Majesty.

Only once did the Emperor fancy smoking a pipe. It was on the following occasion. The Persian Ambassador (or possibly the Ottoman Ambassador, who, during the Consulate, came to Paris) had made the Emperor a present of a very handsome Oriental pipe. One day he thought he should like to try it, so accordingly all was got in readiness for such experiment, and a light applied to the pipe-bowl. But in the way His Majesty set to work, it was obviously impossible for the pipe to draw, he being content to open and shut his mouth alternately without inhaling at all. "Devil take it!" cried he at last. "What a time it is!" I ventured to point out that he was doing it wrong, and showed him the proper way to smoke. But the Emperor still persisted in his droll sort of yawning. Tired out by such futile attempts, he

at last gave me back the pipe and told me to light it. This I did, and got it into working order. Yet scarcely had he puffed a cloud than the smoke, which he did not know how to eject from his mouth, got into his throat and nostrils, coming out of his nose and his eyes. So soon as he recovered breath, he cried out, "Take the beastly thing away! Oh! what filth! I shall be sick directly!" Indeed, for over an hour he felt very queer, and once and for all relinquished a pleasure which, in his own phrase, was only fit to be "a pastime for sluggards."

In the choice of his clothes, the Emperor only cared for the cloth to be fine, and the fit, loose and easy. His frock-coats, jackets, and the famous "grey redingote," were all made of the very best Louviers cloth. During the Consulate period, as it was then the fashion, he wore very long coat-tails. Later on, these became no longer the mode, but were worn shorter; yet the Emperor persisted in having his long, and I had great trouble in persuading him to alter them. Indeed, it was merely by a trick that I succeeded. Each time that I ordered a new coat for His Majesty, I told the tailor to make the tails a good inch shorter, until at last, without being himself aware of it, the

Emperor no longer looked ridiculous. Upon this point he was no less unwilling to give in than upon others; he liked to keep to his old ways and, above all, not to be made uncomfortable, so that, as regards dress, he was not exactly the glass of fashion. The King of Naples, the best dressed man in France, and always turned out with consummate taste, sometimes gently rallied him about his toilette. "Sire," said he to the Emperor, "Your Majesty dresses too much like an old fogey. Pray, Sire, be pleased to set your loyal subjects an example in good taste."

"No doubt," replied Napoleon, "no doubt, in order to please you, I ought to dress like a dandy—like a coxcomb; in short, like His Majesty the King of Naples and the Two Sicilies. I keep to my old habits, I do!" "Yes, and to your *habits tués*[1] as well!" rejoined the King. "Detestable!" cried the Emperor, "why, that is worthy of Brunet!" and they both tittered at the pun, while endorsing the Emperor's verdict.

The Emperor's vests and breeches were always made of white kerseymere. He changed these every morning, and they were only cleaned for him three

1 *Habitudes, habits tués*—a cheap sort of pun, even for a King.

or four times. Two hours after leaving his room, it often happened that his breeches were all stained with ink, owing to his habit of wiping his pen on them, and of spirting ink in all directions by jerking his pen against the table. Nevertheless, as he was dressed for the day, he never cared to change into other clothes, but always remained in this soiled state. His shoes were very light and thin, being lined with silk. His boots were lined with white fustian. If one of his legs itched, he used to scratch the place with the heel of his boot or his shoe: this added perceptibly to the effect of the ink-stains. His shoe-buckles were of gold, oval, plain or cut. He also wore gold garter-buckles. During the Empire I never once saw him wear trousers.

True to his old habits, the Emperor, during the early period of the Empire, used to employ a bootmaker at the Military School, who made his boots to an old measure, taken many years previously. Thus, both his shoes and his boots were badly made and clumsy-looking. For a long while he wore pointed toes; but I succeeded in getting them altered to the fashionable shape, the *bec de canne*. At last his old measure became too small, and I persuaded His Majesty to have a fresh one taken. I ran off to the bootmaker—a big noodle, who had succeeded to his

father's business. He had never seen the Emperor, though he had done work for him, and was flabbergasted at hearing that he would have to appear before His Majesty; in fact, he grew dizzy at the thought of such a thing. How should he venture to enter the Royal presence? What costume should he wear? I encouraged him, and told him he ought to wear Court dress—black coat, small clothes, hat and sword. Thus caparisoned, he came to the Tuileries. On entering His Majesty's room, he made a profound bow, and seemed greatly embarrassed.

"Was it not you," said the Emperor, "who used to make boots for me at the Military School?"

"No, Your Majesty the Emperor and King; it was my father."

"Then, why does he not do so any longer?"

"May it please Your Majesty, he is dead."

"How much do you charge me for shoes?"

"May it please Your Majesty, the price is eighteen francs."

"That is very dear."

"Your Majesty can pay a good deal more than that, if so disposed."

At this silly reply, the Emperor burst out laughing, and let the man take his measure. The Emperor's laughter utterly unnerved the poor fellow,

and as, with hat under arm, he approached, making countless bows, his sword got between his legs and snapped in two, while he fell forward upon his hands and knees. To maintain one's gravity was utterly impossible, and the Emperor laughed louder than ever, until at last the luckless cobbler, having thus got rid of his sword, found it easier to take the Emperor's measure, when he withdrew, making many excuses.

All His Majesty's body-linen was of extremely fine texture, and marked with "N," surmounted by a crown. At first, he never wore braces, but subsequently made use of these, which he found very comfortable. Next to his skin he wore an English flannel waistcoat. For summer wear, the Empress Josephine had twelve cashmere undervests made for him.

Many persons believed that the Emperor in war-time wore a cuirass under his clothes; but this is absolutely false. His Majesty never in his life wore a cuirass, or anything similar to a cuirass, either over his clothes or underneath them.

The Emperor never wore jewellery, and had neither purse nor money in his pocket, but only his handkerchief, snuff-box and sweetmeat-box.

While so many portraits exist of His Majesty,

it seems useless to describe the shape of his hat, which was of beaver, very fine and very light, the inside being lined with silk and wadded. He never wore a tassel or feathers, merely a plain silk cord, with a small tricolour cockade.

The Emperor had several watches by Bréquet and Meunier, of very simple make, the face quite plain and the case of gold. M. Las Casas speaks of a gold watch in a double case and marked with "B," which the Emperor always had on his person. I never knew of such a watch, though I took charge of all his jewellery for some years, even of the Crown diamonds. The Emperor often broke his watch when, as already stated, he used to fling it down anywhere in his bedroom. He had two alarm-clocks, made by Meunier, one in his carriage, and the other beside his bed. The Emperor's swords were of very plain make, gold-mounted, with an owl on the hilt.

The Emperor had two swords made like those which he wore at the battle of Austerlitz. One of these was given to the Emperor Alexander, the other to Prince Eugene, in 1814. That which the Emperor actually wore at Austerlitz, on which the name and date of this memorable battle were engraved, must be shut up in the column on the

Place Vendôme. I believe that His Majesty still had it when at Saint-Helena.

When the Emperor had to leave the capital to rejoin his armies, or merely to make a tour in the provinces, no one ever knew exactly when he was going to start. I often think the Emperor adopted this plan to put spies off the scent. Nobody but he himself knew what day he was going to start; everything went on exactly as usual. After a concert, a play, or other entertainment of that sort, at which many persons were present, the Emperor would say to his coachman, "I start at two o'clock." Sometimes it was sooner, sometimes later; but, once fixed, the hour was never altered.

I was saying, just now, that His Majesty liked prompt replies which showed signs of sharp, ready wit. In proof of this let me cite the following.

One day, at a review in the Place Carrousel, the Emperor's horse reared, and, while endeavouring to rein it in, His Majesty's hat fell off. A lieutenant (Rabusson was his name, I fancy), at whose feet the hat had fallen, picked it up and, leaving the ranks, handed it to His Majesty. "Thank you, Captain," said the Emperor, still busy in quieting his horse. "In what regiment,

Sire?" asked the officer. The Emperor then looked more closely at him, and, perceiving his mistake, said, smiling, "Ah, you're right—in the Guards." Shortly afterwards, the new captain received his brevêt, due solely to his presence of mind, yet which by his valour and ability he certainly deserved.

At another review, His Majesty noticed in the ranks an old soldier wearing three stripes on his arm. He recognised him as one who had been in the Italian campaign, and, approaching him, said, "Well, my good fellow, why haven't you got the Cross? You don't look as if you had behaved badly."

"Sire," replied the grey-beard, grim and stolid, "they gave me three rats' tails instead of the Cross."

"Never mind, you sha'n't have a fourth!" said the Emperor, laughing; and he ordered Marshal Berthier to place on the list for speedy promotion this brave old warrior, who, in fact, soon became a knight of the Legion of Honour.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Pope leaves Rome to come and crown the Emperor—His arrival in Paris—His stay there—The 2nd of December, 1804—The Emperor's costume on Coronation Day—The Empress's jewels—The religious ceremony—Music performed on that occasion—M. Lesueur's march—Josephine crowned by the Emperor—The idea of a divorce—The Emperor's chagrin, and its cause—The coronation vows—Their Majesties' throne—The illuminations—Gifts of the Emperor to the Church of Notre Dame—Discipline and the tunic of Saint-Louis—The Emperor's coronation medals—Public rejoicings.

Pope Pius VII. left Rome at the beginning of November. Accompanied by the Governor of Piedmont, General Menou, His Holiness reached Mont Cenis on the morning of November 15th. The Mont Cenis route had undergone various modifications, and all dangerous places were railed off. The Holy Father was officially greeted by M. Poitevin-Maissemy, Prefect of Mont Blanc. After a brief visit to the Hospice, he crossed the mountain in a sedan-chair, escorted by an immense crowd, which prostrated itself in front of him in order to receive his blessing.

On November 17th, His Holiness took coach again, and thus finished the rest of his journey, being still accompanied in this way. The Emperor went to meet the Holy Father, and their meeting was on the Nemours road, in the forest of Fontainebleau. The Emperor got off his horse, and the two sovereigns drove back to Fontainebleau in the same carriage. It is said that, to avoid the one giving preference to the other, they both got into the vehicle simultaneously, His Majesty on the right side, and His Holiness on the left. If the Emperor was guilty of any finesse or undue precaution to avoid compromising his dignity, I cannot say, but what I *do* know is, that it was impossible to show more courtesy and attention than he did to the venerable old man. The day after his arrival at Fontainebleau, the Pope made his entry into Paris with all the honours usually paid to the chief ruler of the Empire. He was installed at the Tuileries in the Pavillon de Flore, and, by a delicate, thoughtful attention on the part of the Emperor, the Holy Father's apartments were furnished exactly like those which he occupied at Rome. At this he was greatly surprised, and he expressed his warm appreciation of an attention which he called "thoroughly filial," wishing hereby to allude to the respect ever shown towards him by the Emperor and

to the new title of Eldest Son of the Church, which, together with the Imperial crown, His Majesty was about to assume.

Every morning, by His Majesty's order, I went to enquire after the Holy Father. Pius VII. had a handsome, noble countenance, an air of angelic goodness, with a sweet, sonorous voice. He said little, speaking slowly but gracefully. Extremely simple, and of incredible sobriety, he was indulgent and never harsh towards others. Moreover, as regards good living, the members of his suite were at no pains to imitate him, but, on the contrary, they took full advantage of the order given by the Emperor to supply everything that was required. The tables set apart for them were abundantly, and even splendidly, furnished; nevertheless, this did not prevent their claiming a basket of Chambertin "for the Pope's private table," albeit he dined by himself, and never drank anything but water.

The stay of nearly five months which the Holy Father made in Paris was a time of edification for the Faithful, and His Holiness must have carried away with him an excellent impression of a people that, after ten years' cessation of all the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, suddenly resumed their practice with strange eagerness. When not

confined to his apartments by delicate health, the Pope used to visit the churches, museums, and other public institutions. If bad weather made going out impossible, all those persons who desired such a privilege were presented to His Holiness in the large gallery of the Musée Napoleon. Certain ladies of my acquaintance begged me to assist them in obtaining an audience of the Holy Father, and I was very pleased to accompany them on this occasion.

The ceremony of the coronation of Their Majesties had been fixed for the 2nd of December. On the morning of this eventful day everyone in the château was up betimes, especially those who were attached to the wardrobe department. The Emperor rose at eight o'clock. It was no light matter to help him in putting on the sumptuous dress which had been prepared for the occasion; and while I was dressing him he was not chary of his oaths and maledictions against tailors, embroiderers, and all who had had a share in preparing his costume. As I kept handing him this or that portion of his dress he would say, as he pinched my ears, "That's very fine, you rascal; and I expect it'll be a fine price, too!"

This was the dress in question: gold-em-

broidered silk stockings, with the Imperial crown worked in the corner; white velvet shoes, laced and embroidered with gold; white velvet breeches, embroidered with gold at the seams, with diamond buttons and garter-buckles; the vest also of white velvet, embroidered with gold and diamond buttons; the coat of crimson velvet, faced with white velvet, and which before and behind was one glittering mass of gold embroidery. The short cloak was crimson, lined with white satin; it hung over the left shoulder, and was fastened across the right breast by a double clasp of diamonds. Formerly, it was the Grand Chamberlain who used to hand the Sovereign his shirt. His Majesty, so it appears, paid no heed to such etiquette, and it was I who performed such office, just in simple, every-day fashion. The shirt was one of His Majesty's ordinary ones, but of very beautiful cambric; the Emperor's linen was always of the very best. It had superb lace cuffs; the cravat was of the finest muslin, with a magnificent lace collarette. The hat was of black velvet, surmounted with two white aigrettes, ornamented with diamonds and the Regent button. Thus attired, the Emperor left the Tuileries, and it was only on reaching Notre Dame that he put on the grand coronation mantle. This was of

crimson velvet, covered with gold bees, lined with white satin and ermine, and fastened with gold knots. It weighed at least eighty pounds, and though it was held up by four grand dignitaries, the Emperor looked overwhelmed by it. In fact, as soon as he got back to the palace, he hastened to take off this rich and cumbersome dress, donning instead his grenadier uniform, while continually exclaiming, "At last I can breathe!" In the day of battle he was certainly far more at his ease.

The coronation jewels worn by the Empress consisted of a crown, a tiara and a girdle, all made by M. Margueritte. The crown was of eight branches, joined beneath a gold globe and surmounted by a cross. The branches were ornamented with diamonds, four in the form of palm-leaves and four like myrtle-leaves. It also was encrusted with large emeralds and amethysts. The tiara was composed of four rows of pearls of the finest water, with foliage in diamonds, perfectly assorted and set with consummate art. In front were several large brilliants, one of which weighed 149 grains. The girdle was a gold ribbon, ornamented with thirty-nine rose diamonds.

The Emperor's sceptre was made by M. Odiot. It was of silver, encircled by a gold serpent, sur-

mounted by a globe, on which was a figure of Charlemagne. The hand of Justice and the crown and sword were alike of most exquisite workmanship, and came from the *ateliers* of M. Biennais.

At nine o'clock in the morning, the Pope left the Tuileries, and proceeded to Notre Dame, in a carriage drawn by eight dappled-grey horses. The housings of the coach bore a tiara with all the Papal attributes in gilt bronze. The first attendant upon His Holiness preceded the carriage, riding on a mule and bearing an enamelled cross.

There was an interval of about an hour between the arrival of the Pope at Notre Dame and that of Their Majesties. It was at eleven o'clock precisely that they left the Tuileries, their departure being notified by numerous salvoes of artillery. The State coach was ablaze with gold and decorations, and drawn by eight richly-caparisoned horses. On the hood of the coach was a crown, supported by four eagles with outspread wings. The panels of this carriage, an object of universal admiration, were mirrors, instead of being of wood, and, thus reflected, the back of the carriage seemed exactly like the front. In getting in, Their Majesties sat in front by mistake. It was the Empress who first perceived this error, at which both she and her husband

laughed much. The religious ceremony lasted nearly four hours, and, for the principal actors, must have been intensely fatiguing. I do not think that I ever heard more beautiful music than on this occasion. It was composed by MM. Paësiello, Rose and Lesueur, musicians-in-ordinary to Their Majesties. The orchestra and the choirs included the best talent of Paris. The military bands, under the leadership of M. Lesueur, were first-rate, and they played, among other things, a march composed by M. Lesueur, by order of the Emperor, for the Boulogne army. Competent judges say that this march deserves to rank with the very best ever written. As for me, this music made me tremble and turn pale; my every fibre thrilled as I listened to it.

His Majesty did not wish the Pope to touch his crown, but himself placed it upon his own head. It was a diadem of oak-leaves and laurels, wrought in gold. His Majesty then took the crown designed for the Empress, and, after momentarily placing it on his own head first, he set it on the brow of his august spouse, as she knelt in front of him. She shed tears of emotion, and, on rising, gave the Emperor a look full of tenderness and gratitude. The Emperor returned it, yet without losing aught of

the grave demeanour which so imposing a ceremony before so many witnesses exacted. Thus, despite such embarrassment, their hearts spoke each to each in the midst of that brilliant assemblage. Assuredly, at that moment no thought of a divorce ever entered the Emperor's mind; and, for my part, I am certain that this cruel separation would never have occurred if the Empress had only been able to have children, or even if the young Napoleon, son of the King of Holland and Queen Hortense, had not died just at the time that the Emperor thought of adopting him. Yet it behoves me to confess that the fear, or rather the certainty, that from Josephine he would never get an heir to his throne drove the Emperor to despair, and often I have heard him break off in the middle of his work and bitterly exclaim, "To whom, then, am I going to leave all this?"

After Mass, His Excellence Cardinal Fesch, Grand Almoner of France, brought the Testament to the Emperor, who, from his throne, took the Imperial oath, his voice being so loud and clear that all present could hear every word. Then, for the twentieth time, perhaps, the cry of "Long live the Emperor!" rang out from every lip; the *Te Deum* was chanted, and Their Majesties left the

church in the same way that they had entered it. The Pope remained in the sacred edifice for another quarter-of-an-hour after Their Majesties' departure, and when he rose to go he was greeted with loud cheers.

Their Majesties did not get back to the château until half-past six, the Pope returning about half-an-hour later. I may mention that the throne used by Their Majesties, was placed on a semi-circular daïs, covered with a blue cloth on which gold bees were worked. It had twenty-two steps. The throne was draped with red velvet, and it had a canopy of the same material, to the left of which sat the Empress, the Princesses, and the ladies-in-waiting; while on the right sat the Emperor's two brothers, the Archchancellor and the Archtreasurer.

Nothing was more splendid than the general view of the Tuileries Gardens on the evening of that momentous day. The large square was lighted up on every side by lamps, arranged archwise; from each arch hung a garland of coloured lights. The grand alley was decorated with colonnades topped by stars; on the terraces were mimic orange-trees of fire; all the trees in the other alleys were lighted up by lanterns; and, to set a crown

upon the whole brilliant scene, a huge star was hung above the Place de la Concorde. It was all like one vast palace of fire.

On the occasion of his coronation, His Majesty gave several splendid presents to the Metropolitan Church, among others, an enamelled chalice ornamented with bas-reliefs, the work of the celebrated Germain.

On that morning, the Governor of Paris, Marshal Murat, gave a grand breakfast in honour of the German Princes who came to Paris to attend the coronation. After breakfast, the Marshal had them conveyed to Notre Dame in four carriages-and-six, with an escort of a hundred cavalry, commanded by one of his aides-de-camp. This escort was particularly noticeable, by reason of its sumptuous elegance.

The day following this grand and memorable ceremony was observed as a day of public rejoicing. From early morning huge crowds, favoured by beautiful weather, thronged the boulevards, quays and squares, where they found scope for endless amusement.

The heralds-at-arms passed through all the public squares at an early hour, scattering commemorative medals among the crowd. On one side

of these medals was the head of the Emperor, wearing the crown of the Cæsars, with the inscription, "Napoleon Emperor." The reverse bore a figure in magistrate's dress, and that of an ancient warrior supporting on his shield a hero crowned and clothed in the Imperial mantle. Underneath were the words, "The Senate and the People." Directly the heralds-at-arms had gone past, the festivities commenced, which lasted until a late hour.

On the Place Louis Quinze, then called Place de la Concorde, four large dancing-booths had been erected, while marionettes and Punch-and-Judy shows were stationed at regular intervals along the boulevards. Groups of singers and players executed national airs and warlike marches; jugglers, rope-dancers and merry-andrews of every type served to divert passers-by and while away the hours until the illuminations and fireworks should begin.

The illuminations indeed were marvellous, and the fireworks, let off on the Pont de la Concorde, surpassed in splendour all previous displays of the kind.

CHAPTER XXV

My marriage with Mademoiselle Charvet—My wife presented to Madame Bonaparte—The Charvets' intimacy with the Empress—M. Charvet leaves for Saint-Cloud—Fire at the château and death of Madame Charvet—The Empress desires to see Mademoiselle Charvet—She will be as a mother to her, and find her a husband—She complains to M. Charvet of not seeing his daughters—My wife is promised a dowry—The Empress's loss of memory—She provides my sister-in-law with a husband—Madame Vigogne and the Empress's protégés—The school-girl in flames—Madame Vigogne's presence of mind—The Empress sympathises.

It was on January 2nd, 1805, just a month after the coronation, that I married the eldest daughter of M. Charvet, thus forming an alliance which up till now has been, and, as I trust, will continue to be, the happiness of my life. I promised the reader that I would say very little about myself; and, as a matter of fact, what interest can there be in details of my private life which have no connection with the great man for whose sake I undertook to write these Memoirs? Still, I crave indulgence and the permission to revert to this, for me, most interesting

period which decided the remainder of my existence. Doubtless, a man who endeavours to write down his recollections is not prohibited from setting store by such things as particularly concern himself. Moreover, even in the most personal matters of my own life there were certain circumstances of which Their Majesties were cognisant, and which, accordingly, deserve attention if one would form a correct estimate of the character of the Emperor and of the Empress.

My wife's mother had been presented to Madame Bonaparte during the first Italian campaign, and she liked her, for Madame Bonaparte—thoroughly kind-hearted as she was, and herself no stranger to misfortune—could well sympathise with the griefs of others. She promised to interest the General on behalf of M. Charvet, my father-in-law, who had just lost his appointment at the Treasury. During this time Madame Charvet was in correspondence with a friend of her husband's, who was courier, I believe, to General Bonaparte. The latter used to open and read his courier's letters, and he asked who the young woman was who wrote so cleverly and with such good sense. Madame Charvet indeed deserved this double compliment. My father-in-law's friend thus saw his opportunity, and told the General-in-Chief all the troubles which had befallen the

Charvet family. Napoleon said that on his return to Paris he would like to see M. and Madame Charvet. Consequently, they were presented, and Madame Bonaparte was delighted to find that her *protégés* had now become those of her husband also. It was settled that M. Charvet should accompany the General to Egypt; but, on reaching Toulon, Madame Bonaparte wished my father-in-law to go with her to Plombières. I have already narrated the shocking accident which happened there, and how M. Charvet was sent to Saint-Germain to fetch Mademoiselle Hortense from boarding-school. On his return to Paris, M. Charvet looked about everywhere in the suburbs for a country-house, which the General had commissioned his wife to purchase during his absence.

When Madame Bonaparte fixed upon La Malmaison, M. Charvet with his wife and three children were placed in charge of this charming residence. My father-in-law strained every nerve to protect the interests of his benefactress, and Madame Charvet often acted as private secretary to Madame Bonaparte.

Mademoiselle Louise, who became my wife, and Mademoiselle Zoë, her sister, were Madame Bonaparte's favourites, especially the latter, who spent

more time at La Malmaison than Louise did. The many kindnesses of her noble patroness had made this girl so familiar that she always addressed Madame Bonaparte in the second person singular, as if she were her equal, saying to her one day, "Ah! you're lucky, you are! You've got no mother to scold you, if you tear your dress."

Once, while away campaigning with the Emperor, I wrote to my wife, asking her to give me details concerning the life which she and her sister used to lead at La Malmaison. I am able to transcribe her reply:

"We sometimes had to act the most extraordinary parts in burlesques and amateur pantomimes. One evening half the drawing-room was screened off by a gauze curtain, behind which was a bed draped in the Greek style, on which, clad in white, lay a man asleep. Grouped beside the sleeper, Madame Bonaparte and other ladies beat, in no very rhythmic fashion, upon bronze vases—making, indeed, most awful discord. While such din continued, one of these gentlemen held me up in the air by my waist, while I moved my arms and legs in time to the weird music. The concert of these ladies at last awoke the sleeper, who gazed at me wide-eyed, apparently horror-struck at my gyrations. Then he rose

and swiftly withdrew, followed by my brother on all fours, who, I suppose, was meant to represent a dog pursuing this strange person. As I was then quite a child, I have only a confused idea of it all; anyhow, Madame Bonaparte and her companions appeared to be having a good bit of fun together."

When the First Consul came to live at Saint-Cloud, he said a good many flattering things to my father-in-law, and gave him the post of head-porter at the château. It was a place of trust, involving great responsibilities. M. Charvet had the control of all the servants as well. When a fire broke out at the château in 1802, Madame Charvet, being far advanced in pregnancy, received a great shock. It was not thought advisable to bleed her, and, as the result of a bad miscarriage, her death ensued, she being still under thirty. Louise had been at school for some years, and her father took her away to keep house for him. She was then twelve years old. One of Louise's friends has been kind enough to furnish me with a letter written to her by my wife soon after our marriage. From this I take the following passage:

"Upon my return from school, I went to see Her Majesty the Empress (then Madame Bonaparte) at the Tuileries. I was in deep mourning. She took

me on to her knee and comforted me, saying that she would be as a mother to me and find me a husband. I wept, and declared that I did not want to get married. 'Not just now,' replied Her Majesty, 'but some day you will, I am certain.' However, I did not feel convinced that I should ever want to be married. She kissed me again, and afterwards I withdrew. When the First Consul was at Saint-Cloud, the head-servants used always to meet at my father's house, for my father, as the oldest of them all, was a great favourite with the domestics. M. Constant, who had seen me as a child at La Malmaison, thought me sufficiently sensible at Saint-Cloud to wish to make me an offer, subject to Their Majesties' approval. It was settled that we should be married after the coronation. A fortnight after our marriage I attained the age of fourteen. Both my sister and myself are treated by the Empress with the greatest kindness, and if, fearing to seem importunate, we stay away for a time, she complains to my father. During her toilette in the morning she allows us to be present, and she is laced and dressed before us, only her women and servants being in the room, and they, like ourselves, consider their happiest moments to be those spent with this adorable Princess. The conversation on these occa-

sions is nearly always delightful, and sometimes Her Majesty recounts some amusing anecdote, of which, by a chance word from one of us, she has suddenly been reminded."

The Empress promised Louise a dowry, yet the money set apart for that purpose was spent in another way, and my wife only got two or three pieces of stuff and sundry small trinkets. M. Charvet had too much delicacy to remind the Empress of her promise; thus there was nothing for it but to go without; she could no more economise than she could refuse anybody anything. Soon after my marriage, the Emperor asked me what the Empress had given to my wife, and when I replied, he was extremely vexed, doubtless because the sum demanded of him for Louise's dowry had been used for another purpose. On this occasion it was that Emperor assured me that he himself would always make provision for me, that he was satisfied with my services, and that of this he would give me proof. I said just now that my wife's sister *Zoë* was the Empress's favourite. Yet she, when she married, got no handsomer dowry than Louise's. Her Majesty, however, expressed a wish to see the girl's husband, and said to him with quite maternal solicitude, "Sir, I commend my daughter to your care; pray make her happy. She deserves

this; and I shall be very vexed with you if you fail to appreciate her." When *Zoë*, with her mother-in-law, escaped from Compiègne in 1814 and went to Evreux to be confined, the Empress, hearing this, sent her head-valet to take the young woman everything that she thought might be necessary in such an emergency. She even reproached her for not coming to Navarre.

My sister-in-law had been brought up at the same boarding-school as Mademoiselle Josephine Tallien. Her schoolmistress was Madame Vigogne, widow of the colonel of that name, an old friend of the Empress's, who first advised her to set up a school and promised to get her all the pupils that she could. Under the management of this lady the school prospered, for she had remarkable talent and exquisite breeding. She used often to take certain of the pupils recommended by Her Majesty to visit the Empress, who petted them and gave them presents. One day, when Madame Vigogne was ready, dressed to visit the Empress, as she was going downstairs to her carriage she heard piercing cries in one of the class-rooms. Rushing in, she saw one of the girls in flames. With praiseworthy presence of mind, Madame Vigogne promptly wrapped the child in the long trailing skirts of her gown, thus extin-

guishing the flames. The brave lady was badly burned about the hands, yet she pluckily went straight on to the Empress, just as she was, and told her what had occurred. Her Majesty was greatly touched by such real heroism, and ordered one of her Court physicians to attend Madame Vigogne and her little pupil.

CHAPTER XXVI

Portrait of the Empress Josephine—Details as to her toilette—Her luncheon—M. de Beaumont—Her love of jewellery—Anecdote concerning her first marriage—Marie Antoinette's armoire—*The Empress as peacemaker—Her affection for Eugene and Hortense—The family portrait—I am invited to inspect this—Josephine's love of little children—A word about the divorce—Letter of Prince Eugene to his wife—My visits to La Malmaison after the divorce—My leave-taking of the Empress — Her injunctions — The Empress desires to see the Emperor—My wife goes to see the Empress—The Empress holds a council in a stuff gown—Her exquisite courtesy—How she punished her ladies-in-waiting —M. Denon — The Malmaison cabinet of antiques — The Empress's collection of coins — The orphan saved from the Seine—Pillet and his wife visit the Empress—A touching scene.*

Of medium height, the Empress had a perfectly-modelled figure, her every movement being light and graceful. She almost floated as she walked, while her carriage always had the majesty of a sovereign about it. Her expressive face mirrored all the varying impressions of her soul, without ever losing its habitual look of sympathy and kindliness. Whether joyous or sorrowful, her coun-

tenance was pleasant to look upon. If she smiled, involuntarily one smiled, too, just as one became sad if she showed signs of grief. Never did woman more perfectly justify the truth of the saying that "The eyes are the mirror of the soul." Hers were dark blue, their large, almond-shaped lids being always half-shut, fringed as these were with the most beautiful lashes; and when thus dreamily she gazed at you, you felt drawn towards her as by a resistless force. Into so seductive a glance, it would have been hard for the Empress to infuse any severity; yet, if she liked, and if need be, she could look imposing. She had beautiful long, silky hair; its colour—a light chestnut—matched well with her dazzlingly white, soft skin. At the beginning of her power, the Empress was still fond of wearing a red handkerchief in the morning as a head-dress, which gave her the look of a creole in the most captivating way imaginable.

Yet that which more than anything else lent her special charm was the ravishing sound of her voice. How often did it happen that I, like many others, would stop short merely to enjoy listening to that lovely voice! Perhaps one can hardly say that the Empress was beautiful, but her sensitive, kind face, and the seraphic grace of her whole

personality made her one of the most attractive of women.

During her stay at Saint-Cloud, the Empress usually rose at nine o'clock, when she made her first toilette, which lasted till ten o'clock. She then moved to the drawing-room, where she saw such persons as had solicited the favour of an audience. Sometimes, too, at this hour and in the same room, the Empress interviewed her tradespeople. At eleven o'clock, when the Emperor was absent, she breakfasted with her senior lady-in-waiting and other ladies. Madame de la Rochefoucault, first lady-in-waiting to the Empress, was hunchbacked, and so short in stature that, when she sat down to table, an extra cushion, very thick and of violet satin, had to be placed on her chair. For such physical drawbacks, however, Madame de la Rochefoucault made amends by her wit, which was keen and brilliant, if a trifle caustic, and by her polished manners, which were those of an exquisitely-bred Court lady. After breakfast, the Empress played a game at billiards, or, if the weather was fine, she walked in the gardens or the park enclosures. Such recreation, however, lasted but a very short time, and Her Majesty soon went back to her apartments, where she became engaged upon embroidery, while chatting to her

ladies-in-waiting, who, like herself, did needlework. If uninterrupted by visitors, about two or three o'clock the Empress drove out in an open *calèche*, and, upon her return, her grand toilette for the evening was made. Occasionally, the Emperor was present at this. Sometimes, too, he would surprise Her Majesty in the drawing-room, when one was always sure to find him amusing, amiable and merry. At six o'clock dinner was served, but the Emperor usually forgot this, so that it was indefinitely delayed. More than once I can remember such meals postponed until nine and ten o'clock at night. Their Majesties dined together, either alone or with a few select guests—princes of the Imperial family, or ministers. Whether there were concert, reception or play, at midnight everyone withdrew, and then the Empress, who liked sitting up late, played at tric-trac with one of the chamberlains. It was generally the Count de Beaumont who had this honour.

Whenever there was stag-hunting, the Empress and her ladies used to follow in a *calèche*. There was a regular sort of costume worn for the occasion —a kind of green riding-habit and a close-fitting cap with white feathers. All the ladies who had taken part in the day's sport dined with Their Majesties afterwards.

When the Empress spent the night in the Emperor's apartment, I entered the room as usual between seven and eight o'clock. I rarely found the illustrious pair asleep. The Emperor generally asked me for some tea, or orange-flower infusion, and got up at once. The Empress would say to him, smiling, "What? are you going to get up? Lie still a little bit longer." "Well, you're not asleep, are you?" replied His Majesty; and then he would roll her in his counterpane, pat her cheeks and shoulders, and laughingly embrace her.

In a few minutes the Empress rose in her turn, put on a dressing-gown and began to read the newspapers; or else she went down the little staircase leading to her own apartments. She never left the Emperor's room without first addressing a few words to me, which showed her unfailing affability and kindness of heart.

Elegant and simple in her dress, the Empress regretted that on State occasions she was obliged to put on sumptuous gowns; jewellery was the one thing of which she was very fond; indeed, she had always had a passion for jewels, and, by handsome presents, the Emperor often gratified this. It delighted her to put them on, and still more to show them to others.

One morning, when my wife went to see the Empress as she was dressing, Her Majesty told how, when just married to M. de Beauharnais, and delighted with all his presents of jewellery, she used to carry these about in her pockets and show them to all her young friends. As the Empress was on the subject of pockets, she ordered one of her ladies to fetch a pair of these in order that my wife might see them. The lady thus commissioned had the utmost difficulty in preserving a grave demeanour as she assured the Empress that no such articles of wearing apparel existed in Her Majesty's wardrobe. The Empress seemed much disappointed and said she was very sorry, as she would have liked to see a pair of her old pockets again. Years had brought with them great changes. The jewels of the Empress Josephine could never have been contained in the pockets of Madame de Beauharnais, long though these were and deep. The *armoire* for jewels which had belonged to Queen Marie Antoinette, and which had never been quite full, was too small for the Empress; and once, when she wished to show all her jewels to certain ladies, a large table had to be got ready on which to place these; yet it proved too small, and other tables were required.

Kind to a fault, full of feeling, and generous to the point of prodigality, the Empress made everyone about her happy. Towards her husband her affection never changed; indeed, nothing could alter it; it was as strong when she breathed her last breath as when she and General Bonaparte first plighted their mutual vows of love. For a long while Josephine was the only woman that the Emperor loved; this distinction, indeed, she deserved. For many years how touching was the perfect harmony existing in the Imperial home! Attentive, considerate and full of affection for Josephine, the Emperor delighted to fling his arms round her neck and her head, playfully patting her, and calling her "My old darling." All the same, this did not prevent him from being occasionally unfaithful to her, though otherwise he never failed to perform his conjugal duties. She, for her part, adored him, strove to do all she could to please him, to discover his likings, to forestall his faintest wish.

At the outset she made her husband somewhat jealous; and sundry reports as to her flightiness having reached him when in Egypt, upon his home-coming the Emperor entered into various explanations with the Empress, not wholly unattended by cries and violence. Yet calm was soon restored, a calm that

hereafter was but rarely disturbed. The Emperor could not resist such suavity and charm.

The Empress had a marvellous memory, of which her husband often took advantage. She was an excellent musician, played the harp well and sang with taste. Her tact was perfect; she had an exquisite appreciation of the fitness of things, and healthy judgment—the soundest conceivable. Always possessed of a sweet, even temper, she was equally obliging to her foes as to her friends; and where quarrelling and discord existed, she brought peace. When the Emperor got angry with his brothers or someone else (and this often happened), the Empress said a word or two which soon set matters right. If ever she asked pardon for anybody, the Emperor rarely refused it, however grave the offence. I could cite a thousand cases of pardon thus solicited and obtained.

As I have said, the Empress was extremely generous. She gave away much in charity, being careful to discover where this was needed. Many emigrants lived entirely upon her generosity. She kept up an active correspondence with the sisters of charity who nursed the sick, and sent them quantities of things. Her valets had instructions to distribute alms in all directions among the indi-

gent. Many other persons were daily charged with similar missions; and all such alms and gifts became singularly precious because of the grace with which they were proffered, and the discernment with which they were bestowed.

At the time of his marriage to Josephine, M. de Beauharnais had a natural daughter, named Adèle. The Empress cherished her as if she had been her own child, was careful to have her well educated, gave her a dowry, and married her to a prefect of the Empire.

Kindly as the Empress treated a child that was not hers, it is impossible to form an idea of her love and devotion to the Queen Hortense and Prince Eugene. It is true that her children loved her fondly in return, and that there never was a better mother, nor a happier, in the whole world. She was proud of her children, and always spoke of them with an enthusiasm which, to such as knew Hortense and her brother, seemed only natural.

I have narrated how, left an orphan by the guillotine, young Beauharnais, when a mere lad, won the heart of General Bonaparte by asking him to restore to him his father's sword. We know, too, how this act made the General anxious to see Josephine, and the sequel of their meeting. When

Madame de Beauharnais became Napoleon's wife, Eugene entered the army, and soon linked his fortune with that of his step-father, who summoned him to Italy as his aide-de-camp. He commanded a squadron of chasseurs, and at the glorious battle of Marengo he shared all dangers with the indomitable warrior who was proud to style him son. A few years afterwards, Eugene became Viceroy of Italy, heir-presumptive to the Imperial crown (a title which he did not keep for long), and husband to a King's daughter.

The vice-Queen Augusta Amelia of Bavaria was as beautiful and as good as an angel. I was once at La Malmaison when the Empress received a portrait of her daughter-in-law, surrounded by her children; one on her shoulder, another at her feet, and a third in her arms. They all looked like little cherubs. Seeing me there, the Empress condescended to ask me to come and admire this group of charming faces. As she spoke, I noticed the tears in her eyes. These portraits were excellently done, and later on I was able to see how truthful they were as likenesses. At once it became a question of how to get toys for these darling children. These the Empress went and chose herself, and superintended their packing and despatch.

One of the Prince's valets assured me that, at the period of the divorce, Prince Eugene wrote a very sad letter to his wife. Possibly he expressed regret therein at not being the Emperor's adopted son. The Princess, however, sent him an affectionate reply, saying, among other things, "It is not the Emperor's heir that I married and that I love; it is Eugene de Beauharnais." This sentence and some others the Prince read aloud to the valet in question (from whom I have the story), and he was touched to tears. Truly, such a woman as this deserved more than a throne.

After this sad event, which the Empress took so terribly to heart and could never be consoled, Her Majesty never left La Malmaison, except when she occasionally travelled to Navarre. Whenever I returned to Paris with the Emperor, my first care was to visit La Malmaison. I was rarely the bearer of a letter from the Emperor; he only wrote to Josephine on great occasions. "Tell the Empress that I am well, and that I hope she is happy." That is what His Majesty almost always said to me on seeing me start. As soon as I arrived, the Empress left everything to come and speak to me. I often stayed an hour (sometimes two) with her, when the Emperor was the one topic of conversation. I had to tell

her of all that he had suffered during the journey, if he had been sad or gay, ailing or in good health. As I gave her these details she wept, charging me a thousand times to be most careful of his health, and give him every possible attention. Hereupon she condescended to ask me about myself, how my wife was—her old favourite—and then she dismissed me with a letter for His Majesty, begging me to tell the Emperor how pleased she would be if he would come and see her.

Before the departure for Russia, the Empress, uneasy as to this war, of which she totally disapproved, redoubled her entreaties. She gave me her portrait, saying, "My good Constant, I count upon you. If the Emperor should fall sick, you will let me know, won't you? Don't keep anything from me, as I love him so dearly!"

The Empress certainly had countless ways of getting news of His Majesty, yet I am convinced that if she had received a hundred letters a day from people surrounding the Emperor, she would have read and re-read these with equal eagerness.

When I got back to Saint-Cloud, or the Tuileries, the Emperor would ask me how Josephine was, and if I had found her in good spirits.

He was pleased to get the letters I brought to him, and hastened to open them.

Whenever, during a journey, or on active service, I wrote to my wife, I always mentioned the Emperor, and the Empress was delighted when Louise showed her such letters. In short, the slightest detail concerning her husband was of supreme interest to the Empress, which showed how intensely fond she always was of him, after their separation as before it. Generous to excess, and incapable of making her expenditure match her income, it often happened that the Empress had to send away her tradespeople, who had called at her own express invitation for the payment of their accounts. This once reached the Emperor's ears, when between the Royal couple a very lively dispute ensued, ending in the decision that for the future no merchant, or tradesman, was to be allowed to call at the château if unprovided with a letter from a lady-in-waiting, or from a private secretary. This rule was strictly observed until the Empress's divorce. When this dispute took place, the Empress wept much, and promised to be more economical. The Emperor forgave her, kissed her, and thus they made their peace. I fancy this was the last quarrel of the kind that ever troubled the Imperial home.

I was told that, after the divorce, as it transpired that the Empress's allowance had been exceeded, the Emperor blamed the treasurer at La Malmaison, and such reproaches, as a matter of course, reached Josephine's ears. Being greatly distressed that the blame should thus have fallen upon her man-of-business, and not knowing how to set matters straight, the Empress held a council in her own apartments, at which she made a point of presiding in a plain stuff gown, without any trimming whatever. This stuff gown was made in a great hurry, and was only worn on this occasion. The Empress, who could not bear saying "No" to anybody, was always pestered by merchants and tradespeople, who told her that they had made such and such a thing expressly for her, and begged her not to send them away, as they did not know how to place their goods elsewhere. Thus she kept everything that they chose to bring, and, consequently, they expected payment.

Towards the members of her household, the Empress was always extremely courteous; reproaches never fell from those lips that were only made to utter charming things. If one of her ladies incurred her displeasure, she punished her by remaining absolutely silent for one, two, three, or even eight days,

according to the gravity of the offence. Such punishment, light as it may seem, was by most delinquents deemed severe, for the Empress knew so well how to inspire affection.

At the time of the Consulate, Madame Bonaparte often received visits from persons desirous of obtaining her protection and her intercession with the First Consul. She also got valuable gifts in the shape of furniture, curiosities, pictures, stuffs, &c. At first, Madame Bonaparte was delighted to receive such presents, and she eagerly opened the packages containing these, like a child with a new toy. Soon, however, gifts arrived in such quantities and so frequently that a room had to be set apart for their reception, and of this my father-in-law kept the key. Here the boxes remained intact until such time as it pleased Madame Bonaparte to have them opened.

When the First Consul decided to live at Saint-Cloud, my father-in-law had to leave La Malmaison and take up his quarters in the new palace, the Emperor being desirous that he should superintend the furnishing of it. Before leaving, my father-in-law accounted to Madame Bonaparte for all that was under his care. Accordingly, the cases, piled up from floor to ceiling, were opened, when Madame Bonaparte was amazed at such costly

offerings, which comprised marble statues, bronzes, and splendid pictures. Eugene, Hortense, and the First Consul's sisters got a good share of these; the remainder served to decorate the rooms at La Malmaison.

The taste which the Empress had for jewels was, for awhile, extended to antiques, cameos and coins. M. Denon flattered her fancy in this respect, and at last persuaded her that she was an excellent judge of antiques, and that she ought to have a cabinet made for these at La Malmaison. Flattered by such a suggestion, the Empress seemed inclined to entertain it; a place was selected for such a museum, and Monsieur de M. was appointed curator. M. Denon, who started the idea, undertook to furnish a collection of coins; but the whim, which had come thus suddenly, vanished with equal swiftness; the museum was turned into a reception-room, and the collection of antiques relegated to a chamber adjoining the bath-room, while Monsieur de M., having nothing more to look after, took up his permanent abode in Paris.

Some time after this, two Court ladies took it into their heads to persuade the Empress that nothing would be handsomer or more suitable for her than a *parure* of Greek and Roman carved gems. Some

of the Court gentlemen seconded such a proposal, which did not fail to please the Empress, as she liked anything that savoured of originality. One day, as I was dressing His Majesty, I saw the Empress enter the room. After a few moments' conversation she said, "Bonaparte, my ladies tell me that I ought to have a *parure* of antiques. Please ask M. Denon to choose a fine set for me." The Emperor burst out laughing, and at first flatly refused. The Grand Marshal of the Palace then came in, when the Emperor told him of Her Majesty's request, and asked for his opinion. The Duke de Friuli thought it was a most reasonable one, and joined his entreaties to those of the Empress. "It's sheer madness," said the Emperor; "but women, I suppose, are bound to have their way. Duroc, just you go to the cabinet of antiques and choose what is wanted."

The Duke de Friuli soon returned with the finest gems of the whole collection. The Court jeweller set them in splendid style; but the whole *parure* proved enormously heavy, and the Empress never wore it.

Though I may be charged with tedious repetitions, I must again state how eager the Empress was ever to do good. One morning, when breakfasting alone with His Majesty, a child's cries were

heard issuing from a secret stair-way. The Emperor looked rather glum, and, frowning, asked what this might mean. I went to look, and found a newly-born infant wrapped up and lying in a bassinette, with a ribbon round its waist, to which a folded piece of paper was attached. I returned to tell what I had seen. "Oh! Constant, bring me the cradle at once!" cried the Empress. The Emperor at first refused to allow this, and expressed his surprise and annoyance that people should have been able to get into his innermost apartments. When the Empress remarked that the intruder must have been one of the household servants, he turned round and gave me a look as if to ask if I had done this. I shook my head. At that moment the baby began to cry, and the Emperor could not help smiling, as he muttered to himself and finally exclaimed, "Josephine, do send that squealer away!" Eager to take advantage of his return to good-humour, the Empress told me to fetch the cradle, which accordingly I brought. She caressed the little one, soothed its cries and read the paper—a petition from the child's parents. Then, going up to the Emperor, she made him fondle it in his turn and pinch its nice fat cheeks, which he did without much pressing, for His Majesty liked playing with little children

himself. The Empress afterwards placed a roll of napoleons in the bassinette, and had the baby taken to the head-porter, with instructions to return it to its parents.

The following is another trait of kindness on the part of the Empress, of which, as on the foregoing occasion, I was a privileged witness. Some months before the coronation, a little girl, aged about four or five, was rescued from the Seine, and Madame Fabien Pillet, a charitable lady, generously offered to make a home for the little orphan. When the coronation took place, the Empress, hearing the tale, desired to see the child; and after affectionately caressing it, as with graceful sincerity she proffered her protection to Madame Pillet and her husband, she said, with the delicacy and tenderness peculiar to herself, "Your kind action gives you too great a claim upon the poor child for me to prevent you from achieving your good work yourselves. Thus I ask you to allow me to pay the cost of her education; but it is you who shall send her to school and take care of her. I only desire to be a sort of second benefactress." It was touching to hear Her Majesty make this generous, delicate little speech, as she stroked the poor girl's hair and, mother-like, kissed her on the forehead. M. and Madame Pillet withdrew, profoundly touched.

CHAPTER XXVII

General Junot appointed Ambassador—Tales of his hasty temper —Louise, his handsome mistress — Madame Bonaparte's maid is her rival—Josephine's indulgence—Napoleon becomes King of Italy—Constant revisits Lombardy—A contrast to his previous journey thither—The Empress wishful to travel with the Emperor—How he was obliged to take her—The Emperor's stay at Brienne—Mesdames de Brienne and de Loménie — The dinner and the whist-party — The Emperor recalls episodes of his childhood—The Brienne peasant—The Emperor visits Mother Margaret—He wants to have breakfast with her—Junot and his old schoolmaster —We pass through Troyes—We stay at Lyons—Cardinal Fesch—Passage of Mont Cenis—Visit of the Pope—Review on the plains of Marengo—The Emperor's costume worn at Marengo is lent to David, the painter—Desaix of mournful memory—The Emperor and Prince Jerome—The Emperor's dissatisfaction—Jerome and Miss Patterson—He sets the Algerian prisoners free—Napoleon's affection for Jerome.

WHEN General Junot was appointed Portuguese Ambassador, I remember a rather comic incident at which the Emperor was highly amused. At Boulogne camp the Emperor gave orders that all the men were to leave off powder and do their hair *à la Titus*.

Many of them grumbled at this, but had to obey, with the exception of one old grenadier belonging to General Junot's regiment. Unable to sacrifice his curls and pigtail, the old fellow declared that he would not obey the rule unless his General himself snipped off the first tuft of hair. As all the officers got no better answer than this, they reported the matter to the General. "Bless me, is that all?" exclaimed Junot; "just bring the old boy here, and we'll soon see." The grenadier was fetched, when Junot deftly clipped away the first greasy tag of powdered hair with a stroke of the scissors, and then he gave the old curmudgeon twenty francs, who was content to let the regimental barber finish the job. When the Emperor heard the tale, he laughed heartily, and highly commended General Junot for his condescension.

One might quote a thousand instances of General Junot's good-nature and soldierly bluffness. Another peculiarity of his might be mentioned, however, which scarcely does him such credit. Such was his want of self-restraint, that he sometimes flew into the most fearful passion, entirely forgetting his rank and the self-control which, in his position, it behoved him to exercise. Everyone knows about his adventures in a gambling-house,

when he tore up the cards, upset the furniture, and thrashed the bank-keepers and croupiers, to make up for the loss of his money. The worst of it was that at that time he was Governor of Paris. Hearing of this scandal, the Emperor sent for Junot, and angrily asked him if he had sworn to live and die a madman. This was nothing short of a prophecy, for the unfortunate General died later from acute mental disorder. To the Emperor's reproaches he replied with equal heat, and was sent (possibly to give him time to grow cooler) to the Boulogne army. Nor was it in gaming-houses alone that the Governor of Paris thus compromised his dignity. I have heard other stories about him of a rather *livelier* sort, but I must refrain from telling these. The fact is, General Junot cared far less about propriety than he did about being the best shot in the army. When riding in the country, he often used to gallop along the road, with a pistol in each hand, and pick off the chickens and ducks that he happened to see by the wayside. He hit a little twig at twenty-five paces, and I even heard that he cut a three-inch clay pipe clean in two, that a soldier held between his teeth. But for the truth of this tale I cannot vouch.

During Madame Bonaparte's first journey to

Italy, to rejoin her husband, she stopped for a while at Milan. At that time she had a maid called Louise, a tall, handsome girl, who, as it appeared, was uncommonly obliging to General Junot. As soon as her work was done, Louise, dressed-out more smartly than her mistress, drove about the town in an elegant carriage, so that often the lady was eclipsed by the maid. On his return to Paris, Napoleon compelled his wife to dismiss the fair Louise, and, being deserted by her fickle gallant, she sank into a state of utter destitution. Since then I often saw her coming to ask the Empress for help, which, as I know, was never denied. After this attempt on her part to rival her mistress's elegance, the poor girl, I believe, married an English jockey, who made her life most unhappy; and she died penniless and forlorn.

The First Consul, having become "Emperor" of the French, could no longer be satisfied, in Italy, with the title of President. Accordingly, certain deputies of the Cisalpine Republic came to Paris to offer His Majesty the title of King of Italy, a title which he accepted. Soon afterwards, he left for Milan, where he was to be crowned. It was with the utmost pleasure that I returned to this lovely country, of which, despite the dangers and hard-

ships of war, I had kept the most delightful recollections. The circumstances of my return were now vastly different. It was as a sovereign this time that the Emperor crossed the Alps and passed through Piedmont and Lombardy, where before he had had to capture every gorge, and stream and defile. In 1800, as escort, the First Consul had an army; in 1805, his *cortège* comprised a peaceful company of chamberlains, lords and ladies-in-waiting and pages.

After the baptism of Prince Napoleon-Louis, the Emperor's nephew, we set out for Italy. The Empress Josephine formed one of the party. Whenever it was possible, the Emperor always liked to take her with him; while, for her part, she was ever eager to accompany her husband, whether this were practicable or not. The Emperor usually kept the fact of his departure a profound secret until the very last moment, suddenly ordering horses to be harnessed at midnight for a journey to Mayence, or Milan, just as if it were a mere casual drive to Rambouillet, or Saint-Cloud. I do not remember on which journey it was that His Majesty decided not to take the Empress Josephine with him. The fact was, His Majesty was less afraid of the shoal of womenfolk in attendance upon his wife than of the

bonnet-boxes and packages which usually follow in the wake of females. He wanted to travel with speed and simplicity, and avoid such enormous additional expense.

Thus he ordered everything to be ready by one o'clock in the morning, a time when the Empress was usually asleep; but, despite every precaution, she got a hint of his going. The Emperor had promised that she should accompany him on his first journey; yet, apparently, he was going to hoax her and start without her! She at once called her waiting-women, and, at last, impatient at their dilatoriness, Her Majesty jumped out of bed, flung on the first clothing she could find, and ran downstairs, stockingless, in an old pair of slippers. She flung herself into the Emperor's arms just as he was about to get into the coach. She came in the very nick of time; a moment later, and he would have been away. At the sight of his wife's tears, the Emperor, as usual, relented. She saw this, and, at a bound, leaped into the carriage. Her Imperial Majesty, however, had scarcely any clothes on whatever, so the Emperor wrapped her in his pelisse, and, before starting, himself gave orders that at the first stopping-place her maid should have everything in readiness that might be needed. Leaving the Empress at Fontainebleau, the Emperor

went on to Brienne, which he reached at six o'clock in the evening. Madame de Brienne, Madame de Loménie and several other ladies, awaited his coming at the entrance to the château. He entered the drawing-room, where he graciously received all those who had the honour of being presented to him. Afterwards, he walked in the gardens, chatting to Madame de Brienne and her companions, and recalling, with marvellous accuracy of memory, all the most minute details of his stay, when a lad, at the Brienne Military School.

The Emperor subsequently dined with his hosts and certain of their acquaintance. After dinner he played a rubber of whist with Mesdames de Brienne, de Vandeuvre and de Nolivres; and at cards, as at table, the Emperor's talk was bright and interesting, he himself being so friendly and so jovial that everyone was charmed.

His Majesty stayed the night at the château of Brienne, and rose early in order to go to the Champ de la Rothière, which used to be one of his favourite haunts. The Emperor seemed delighted at revisiting all these scenes of his youth. He pointed them out with a sort of pride, and his every gesture, his every remark, seemed to say, "See where I began, and where I am now!"

His Majesty walked on in front of those with him, and liked to be the first to name the various places on the way. A peasant, seeing him thus separated from his suite, called out familiarly, "I say, citizen, the Emperor'll be going by soon, eh?" "Yes, yes," replied His Majesty; "just you wait a bit."

On the previous evening the Emperor had asked Madame de Brienne to tell him what had become of Mother Margaret. This was the name given to a peasant-woman who had a hut in the middle of the wood, and to whom the pupils at the Military School used to pay frequent visits. His Majesty had not forgotten her name, and he was surprised and delighted to hear that she was still living. Prolonging his excursion, the Emperor galloped off to the door of the hut, dismounted, and went in to see the worthy woman. He found her greatly enfeebled by age, while he himself was so much changed since the old days that, had her eyesight been good, she would scarcely have recognised him.

"Good day, Mother Margaret," said His Majesty; "don't you want to see the Emperor?"

"Yes; that I do, my good sir," she replied; "I am very curious to have a look at him—in fact, I've got a little basket of fresh eggs, already packed, to

take to the lady up at the château; and when I get there, I mean to stop and see if I can't get a sight of the Emperor, somehow. The bother of it is that I shan't be able to see him like I used to once, when he came to Mother Margaret's to drink milk. In those days he wasn't an Emperor; but, all the same, he made the other fellows knuckle under. Mercy me, you should ha' seen him! For all the milk and eggs, the bread and the broken basins, he always saw that I was promptly paid, setting an example by paying his own score first."

"Why, Mother Margaret," cried the Emperor, laughing, "so you haven't forgotten Bonaparte, then?"

"Forgotten him, my good sir? Do you think one could forget a young fellow like that—so sensible, so well-behaved, and sometimes, too, so sad; though to poor folk he was always kind? I am only a peasant-woman, but I foresaw that that young man would make his way in the world. Well, I wasn't far wrong, was I?"

During this brief conversation, the Emperor had at first turned his back to the door, and his face was thus almost invisible. Gradually, however, he came into the light, and got quite close up to the old woman. Then he began to rub his hands and imitate all his boyish gestures when, as a lad, he

used to visit the worthy dame. "I say, Mother Margaret," he cried; "get us some milk and some new-laid eggs, there's a good soul! We're simply dying of hunger!"

The old woman seemed trying to collect her thoughts, as she stared hard at her visitor.

"Well, Mother, just now you said you were sure you'd recognise Bonaparte. Why, we're old acquaintances, you and I!"

The peasant-woman, astounded, fell upon her knees.

In the kindliest way he raised her up and said: "No, but really, Mother Margaret, I'm as hungry as a hunter; can't you get me something to eat?"

Beside herself with delight, the old woman hastily brought milk and eggs and set them before the Emperor. When this repast was over, he put a purse full of gold into her hands, saying, "You know, Mother Margaret, I always like people to pay their score! Good-bye; I shan't forget you." And while the Emperor got into the saddle, the worthy peasant-woman stood at the threshold, with tears in her eyes, as she promised to pray to God for his welfare.

It was at this time that the Emperor first heard a tale about Junot which vastly amused him. Upon his return from Egypt, the General happened to

be at Montbard, where many years of his childhood had been spent. He had been careful to hunt up all the fellow-scamps of his school-days, and with several of these he had much merry chat about their various boyish escapades. While revisiting his most familiar haunts, in the public square the General happened to fall in with a worthy old fellow, stalking majestically along with a big stick in his hand. Junot instantly rushes up to him, flings his arms round his neck and hugs him to stifling-point. The old man, disengaging himself with great difficulty from such ardent embraces, stared in dazed fashion at General Junot, utterly at a loss to account for such a vehement display of affection on the part of a soldier wearing the uniform of a superior officer and with all the marks of exalted rank.

"What?" cried the General, "don't you know me?"

"General, you must excuse me, but I have not the slightest idea who you are."

"Why, bless me, my dear master, have you forgotten the laziest, naughtiest, most undisciplined of all your pupils?"

"A thousand pardons, but—are you M. Junot?"

"His very self," replied the General, as he renewed his caresses and joked with his companions

about the extraordinary description of himself which had caused him to be recognised. As regards the Emperor, if his memory had failed him as to one of his old masters, it would scarcely have been a character of that kind that would have led to his identification, for everybody knows that he distinguished himself at the Military School by his zeal and application and by his steady conduct.

At Brienne, the Emperor had a somewhat similar experience when visiting the old Military School, then in a dilapidated state. As he was pointing out to his companions the class-rooms, dormitories and refectories, a priest was presented to him who had formerly been sub-prefect in one of the class-rooms. The Emperor instantly recognised him and uttered an exclamation of surprise. Then he chatted with him for over twenty minutes and left him overwhelmed with gratitude.

Before quitting Brienne for Fontainebleau, the Emperor, through the Mayor, caused a memorandum to be given to him of all the most pressing wants of the community, and, upon his departure, gave a considerable sum to be distributed among the hospitals and the poor.

When passing through Troyes, the Emperor, as in every other place, left solid proofs of his

generosity. The widow of a staff officer came from Joinville to Troyes to ask His Majesty for help. I forget her name, but she was over eighty years old. As her husband's period of service was prior to the Revolution, the pension hitherto paid to her had been suppressed by the Republic, and she found herself utterly destitute of means. The brother of General Vouittemont, mayor of a commune in the vicinity of Troyes, was good enough to consult me as to the best way of securing this lady an introduction to the Emperor, and I advised him to have her name placed on the list of those persons desirous of obtaining a private audience of His Majesty. I even took the liberty of speaking about Madame de —— to the Emperor, and the audience was granted. I don't profess to take any credit to myself for this, as, when travelling, the Emperor was easily accessible.

The good lady thus came for her audience with M. de Vouittemont, who, in his municipal capacity, had entrance everywhere. I happened to meet them. She stopped to thank me for the trifling service which she said I had rendered her, and told me that she had been forced to pawn the six silver dishes remaining to her in order to find her journey-money, and that, on reaching Troyes in a

rickety market-cart, in which she had well-nigh been jolted to a jelly, she could not find room in one of the inns, for these were all full, owing to the visit of Their Majesties. Consequently, she would have had to sleep in her cart if M. de Vouittemont had not been so kind as to place his own room at her service. Despite her fourscore years and her poverty, the old lady told me all this with a certain quiet humour, and ended her story by a glance of deep gratitude at her guide, upon whose arm she leaned.

At that moment the officials came to inform her that her turn had come, and she entered the audience-chamber. M. de Vouittemont waited, and chatted to me. When she came out she told us, amid signs of deep emotion, that the Emperor had graciously taken her petition, which he read with care, and at once handed it to one of his ministers, instructing him to see that all was set right that very day. The following day she received the brevet, entitling her to a pension of three thousand francs, of which the first year was paid in advance.

Cardinal Fesch was then Archbishop of Lyons, and, during his visit, the Emperor stayed at the Archbishop's palace; and Monseigneur was at great pains to let his nephew have everything that he could possibly desire. In his anxiety to please,

the Cardinal used to come and consult me several times a day, to make sure that nothing was wanting; indeed, his eagerness to do everything in thoroughly handsome style was noticed by every member of the Imperial household. I fancied that I could detect an excess of zeal on the part of Monseigneur when it came to settling all the expenses incidental to Their Majesties' visit—expenses that were certainly heavy. I fancy, too, that His Eminence got a thumping interest out of it all, and that for such "generous hospitality" he was handsomely indemnified by his illustrious guests.

Crossing the Mont Cenis was not half such a painful experience as was the passage of Mont Saint-Bernard. The road, however, which the Emperor had ordered to be made, was not yet begun. At the foot of the mountain the carriages had to be taken to pieces and placed on the backs of mules. Their Majesties crossed the mountain partly on foot and partly in the most elegant sedan-chairs which had been sent from Turin. The Emperor's chair was lined with crimson satin and fringed with gold, while that of the Empress was of blue satin trimmed with silver. All the snow *en route* had been carefully swept away, so that the paths were clear. On reaching the convent they were most

cordially welcomed by the good monks. The Emperor, who was singularly attached to them, talked with them for some time, and did not omit to give them handsome proofs of his munificence. Hardly had he reached Turin than he issued a Royal decree with regard to the improvement of their hospice, and he continued to contribute to their support until his downfall.

Their Majesties stopped a few days at Turin, their residence being the palace once occupied by the Kings of Sardinia, and which, by a decree issued during our stay, was proclaimed an Imperial residence, as well as the castle of Stupinigi, situated at a short distance from the town. The Pope rejoined Their Majesties at Stupinigi. The Holy Father had left Paris almost at the same time that we had, and before his departure he had received some magnificent presents from the Emperor. These included a gold altar, with gold chandeliers and sacred vessels of the richest workmanship, a superb tiara, some Gobelin tapestry and Savonnerie carpets, as well as a statue of the Emperor in Sèvres porcelain. The Empress also gave His Holiness a Sèvres vase ornamented with paintings by the most famous artists—a veritable masterpiece, four feet in height and two-and-a-half in breadth. It had been expressly

manufactured for the Holy Father, and the design on it, if I remember rightly, was supposed to represent the coronation ceremony.

Each cardinal in the Pope's suite received a handsomely-chased box and the Emperor's portrait set in brilliants, while all the other members of the Papal household got gifts more or less valuable. All these presents were brought by various tradesmen to His Majesty, and I was commanded to take note of each as they came.

The Holy Father also, on his part, made handsome presents to the various officers of the Imperial household who had been told off to wait upon him during his stay in Paris.

From Stupinigi we went on to Alessandria. The morning after his arrival, the Emperor rose very early and inspected the fortifications of the town, as well as all the positions of the Marengo battlefield. He did not return till seven in the evening, having tired out five horses. A few days later, he wished the Empress to see this famous battlefield, and, by his orders, an army of some twenty-five or thirty thousand men was there assembled. The morning of the day fixed for the review, the Emperor left his apartment dressed in a long blue frock-coat, very shabby and with holes in it

here and there. Such holes were made by moths, not by bullets, as certain "Memoirs" erroneously state. His Majesty wore an old hat, with broad gold braid on it, all black and rusty with age, and a general's cavalry sabre, of the sort in vogue at the time of the Republic. These were the coat, hat and sword actually worn by him on the day of the battle of Marengo. M. David, painter-in-ordinary to His Majesty, borrowed this dress of me afterwards, when engaged upon his picture of the crossing of Mont Saint-Bernard. A huge amphitheatre had been erected on the plain for Her Majesty the Empress and those forming her suite. The weather was glorious, as it always is in Italy during May. Having ridden along the lines, the Emperor came and sat beside the Empress, when the cross of the Legion of Honour was distributed among the troops. Then His Majesty laid the foundation-stone of a monument which he had ordered to be erected to all the brave fellows who met their death on this battlefield. When, in the course of a short, spirited speech to his men, the Emperor, in accents of deep emotion, mentioned the name of Desaix, "who died here gloriously for his country," a thrill of grief ran through the ranks. As for myself, I was moved to tears; and, as I beheld this vast army, with its

standards, and the Emperor in that dress, I felt as if I needs must turn aside, every now and then, to look at Her Majesty the Empress on her throne, to assure myself that it was not the 14th of June, of the year 1800.

I think it was during this stay at Alessandria that Prince Jerome Bonaparte had an interview with the Emperor, at which he remonstrated most seriously with his younger brother. At its conclusion, Prince Jerome came out looking much agitated. The Emperor's displeasure was caused by the marriage which, when only nineteen, his brother had contracted with the daughter of an American merchant. His Majesty had declared such a union null and void, on the score of minority, and he also issued a decree forbidding the legal registration of a marriage between Prince Jerome and Miss Patterson. For awhile the Emperor gave Jerome the cold shoulder and kept him at a distance; but, a few days after the said interview at Alessandria, he commissioned him to proceed to Algiers, to rescue, as Imperial subjects, two hundred Genoese, who were there kept prisoners and treated as slaves. This humane mission the young Prince successfully accomplished, returning in August to Genoa with the captives whom he had set free. The Emperor

was pleased at the way in which Jerome had carried out his instructions, and it was upon this occasion that he remarked that "Prince Jerome was very young, very thoughtless, and that he wanted ballast; but that still he hoped to make something of him." Jerome was one of the few people to whom the Emperor was specially attached, albeit he had the best of reasons for being angry with him.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Emperor at Milan — How he employed his time — Prince Eugene, Viceroy of Italy—Their Majesties at Olona—The Emperor goes to Genoa—Lucien and his brother—The Emperor's anger — Lucien returns to Rome — The real cause of their quarrel — Lucien's intrepid answer — The Emperor smashes his watch—Lucien's reception at Madrid—Intimacy between the Prince de la Paix and Lucien — Charles IV.'s friendliness—Lucien in love with a princess—Details of his first marriage — The Emperor's opposition to it — Lucien grows desperate—The curate and the First Consul—Details of the enmity between Lucien and Madame Bonaparte—His attachment to Mademoiselle Méseray—His generosity—He is loth to lose all — Our stay at Genoa — Festivities in honour of the Emperor—Departure for Fontainebleau—The old woman at Tarara.

THEIR Majesties stopped more than a month at Milan, and I had plenty of leisure to see all the sights of this charming capital. Their whole visit was one long series of festivals. It seemed as if no one but the Emperor ever found a moment in which to do any work. According to habit, he shut himself up with his ministers, while the other members of his suite, if not on duty, hastened to join in all the gay doings of the Milanese. I

forbear to give any account of the coronation ceremony, which was much the same as the Paris one. Such functions are always alike, and everyone is more or less familiar with their slightest details. In this holiday-making, one day stood out as a specially happy time for me. It was when Prince Eugene, whose kindness to me I shall never forget, was proclaimed Viceroy of Italy. No one, indeed, was more worthy than he to be raised to such exalted a rank, if, to merit this, nobility, courage, generosity, and the tact of a skilful ruler were required. No Prince was more wishful than he for the prosperity of the people whom he had been appointed to govern. Many a time I have noticed how pleased he was, and what gentle gaiety informed his whole countenance, when he did some kindly action and thus brought happiness to those about him.

One day the Emperor and the Empress went to breakfast at Olona, a little way out of Milan. In the course of his promenade, the Emperor met a poor woman, whose cottage was situate close to where Their Majesties' table had been set out, and he asked her several questions.

"Sir," she replied, not recognising him, "I am very poor, with three children, whom I find it hard

to bring up, for my husband, a day-labourer, is often out of work."

"How much money do you want in order to be perfectly happy?" asked the Emperor.

"Oh, sir, I want a lot!"

"Well, my good woman, but tell me how much?"

"Oh! we want at least twenty louis, sir, in order to put us straight; but how ever are we going to get as much as that?"

The Emperor instantly ordered the sum of three thousand francs to be given to her in gold. He told me to undo the rolls containing the coin and throw all of it into the good woman's lap. At the sight of such a large quantity of gold she grew pale, faltered, and was like to faint.

"Oh! this is too much, sir, it really is. You're not hoaxing a poor woman, are you?"

The Emperor reassured her by saying that all the money was really hers, and that now she could buy a little field with it and a herd of goats, and also she could have her children properly educated. His Majesty never told her who he was. When performing such kindly acts he preferred to remain incognito. I could put many such on record. Historians always seem purposely to pass them over in

silence; yet it is by traits such as these that one is able—indeed, that one is obliged—to portray the Emperor's character.

Certain deputies of the Ligurian Republic, headed by their Doge, came to Milan to petition the Emperor to add Genoa and its territory to the Empire. His Majesty had been careful not to reject such a demand, and by a decree had made the Genoese states form three departments of his kingdom of Italy. The Emperor and Empress left Milan to visit these departments and others.

We had only been a short while at Mantua when, one evening about six o'clock, M. Duroc came to tell me to stop in the little room adjoining the Emperor's apartment, and he informed me that Count Lucien Bonaparte would soon arrive; in fact, soon afterwards I saw him come, and when he was announced I took him into the bed-chamber, and then knocked at the door of the Emperor's study to let him know. After saluting one another, the two brothers were closeted together, and a lively discussion took place. As I was in the ante-chamber —much against my will—I overheard a great part of the conversation. The Emperor insisted upon his brother getting a divorce, promising him a crown if he would resolve to do so, and M. Lucien replied

that he would never abandon the mother of his children. Such resistance greatly irritated the Emperor, whose language became harsh, and even insulting. The altercation lasted more than an hour, when M. Lucien came out of the room, greatly agitated, looking pale and exhausted, his eyes red and full of tears. We never saw him again, for on leaving his brother he returned to Rome.

The Emperor was much upset at his brother's obstinacy, and, on going to bed, never once opened his lips. Some pretend that the cause of their quarrel was on account of the First Consul being made Emperor—a proceeding of which Lucien disapproved. This is an error. The latter, it is true, proposed to carry on the Republic under the joint government of two Consuls, viz., Napoleon and Lucien. While one was to have charge of the war department and foreign matters, the other would be required to superintend home affairs. The non-success of such a proposal may possibly have caused some chagrin to Lucien, but the eagerness with which he accepted the title of senator and peer of the realm sufficiently proves that he felt scant concern for a Republic of which he was not going to be one of the chiefs. I am certain that it was solely M. Lucien's marriage to Madame J. which

caused the quarrel. The Emperor disapproved of this alliance, because the lady had the reputation of having been extremely fast—a *divorcée*, whose husband was a bankrupt who had fled to America. To Napoleon, both the bankruptcy and the divorce were most galling. He always showed great repugnance for divorced people.

The Emperor was already minded to raise his brother to Royal rank by making him wed the Queen of Etruria, who had recently lost her husband. But M. Lucien repeatedly rejected such a proposal. At last the Emperor angrily exclaimed, "You see to what your obstinacy has led you, and your foolish infatuation for a—gay woman!" "Mine at least *is young and pretty*," retorted M. Lucien, thus alluding to the Empress Josephine, who *had been* so, once upon a time. At this bold answer the Emperor's fury knew no bounds. They say that he had his watch in his hand and threw it violently on the floor, exclaiming, "Since you won't listen to reason, I'll just smash you as I smash this watch!" Yet there had been differences between the two brothers before the establishment of the Empire. As one of the causes of Lucien's disgrace, I have often heard the following cited.

When Minister of the Interior, M. Lucien was

ordered by the First Consul not to allow any corn to leave the country. Our granaries were full, and France was abundantly provided. In England, however, this was not so; indeed, a famine had set in there. How it was managed is not known, but the greater portion of the corn crossed the Channel. It has been asserted that it fetched twenty millions of francs. When the First Consul knew of this, he relieved his brother of his portfolio and appointed him Ambassador to the Court of Spain.

At Madrid, M. Lucien was most cordially received by the King and the Royal family, and he became the intimate friend of Don Manuel Godoï, Prince de la Paix. During this mission, acting in accord with Don Manuel, the Badajos Treaty was concluded, for which Portugal, so it is said, gave thirty millions. It was always stated that this sum, paid in gold and diamonds, was divided between the two plenipotentiaries, who did not deem it expedient to consult their respective Courts upon the subject.

Charles IV. was much attached to M. Lucien, and for the First Consul he had the greatest veneration. After carefully inspecting several Spanish horses, with which he intended to present the First Consul, he said to his Master-of-the-Horse, "How I envy you your luck! You're going to see the

great man and speak to him. Can't I take your place?" During his embassy, M. Lucien paid court to a lady of most exalted rank, whose portrait he had received—a medallion set in very fine brilliants. Many a time I saw this portrait, which hung round his neck by a black hair chain. Far from making a mystery of it, he delighted to let everyone see it, hanging it in front of his chest that all might admire its beauty.

Before M. Lucien left Madrid, the King also gave him his miniature set in diamonds. These stones were afterwards removed, and reset in the form of a diamond clasp for M. Lucien's second wife. This is the account, given me by a member of M. Lucien's household, of the latter's marriage to Madame J.

The First Consul was daily and speedily informed of all that went on at the residence of his brothers. Every little event, and the most trifling details were all regularly reported to him. Wishing to get married to Madame J. (whose acquaintance he had made at Count de L.'s, and with whom, by the way, she was on the best of terms), M. Lucien sent for M. Duquesnoy, Mayor of the Tenth Arrondissement, asking him to come to his house in the Rue Saint-Dominique that evening, about

eight o'clock, and bring the marriage register with him. This message was delivered between two and three in the afternoon. About half-past five, M. Duquesnoy received strict injunctions from the Tuileries not to remove the registers from the municipality, and, above all, not to solemnise any marriage unless the contracting parties publicly advertised their names beforehand for the space of a week. At the time appointed, M. Duquesnoy reaches M. Lucien's house, and asks to see the Count, to whom he communicates the order received from the Tuileries. Beside himself with anger, M. Lucien instantly engages a hundred post-horses for himself and suite, and, without further delay, Madame J. and he, together with all their guests and servants, drive off to the château of Plessis-Chamant, not far from Senlis. The curate, who also fills the office of mayor, is instantly summoned. He performs the civil marriage at midnight, and then, donning his surplice, gives the fugitives his nuptial benediction. After this a good supper is served, at which the curate-registrar is present; and, on going home about six in the morning, he finds outside his door a post-chaise with two mounted gendarmes. Entering his house, he meets with an officer of gendarmerie, who politely invites him to accompany him to Paris. The poor curate thinks

he is lost; yet there is nothing for it but to obey. Accordingly, he gets into the post-chaise and is whisked off at full gallop to the Tuileries. Being taken before the First Consul, the latter, in a voice of thunder, addressed him as follows: "So it's you, sir, is it, who marry members of my family without my consent and without having first put up the banns, as, in your quality of registrar, it was your bounden duty to do? Do you know that you deserve to be unfrocked and prosecuted according to law?" The wretched priest already fancied that he was languishing in a dark dungeon. However, after a sharp scolding, he was sent back to his parish. The two brothers, however, were never reconciled.

Despite such quarrels as these, M. Lucien always counted upon his brother's affection to obtain a kingdom. For the authenticity of the following I can vouch; it was told to me by a person worthy of belief. At the head of M. Lucien's household there was a certain M. Campi, a friend of his childhood, and born, like himself, in Corsica. The Count placed unlimited confidence in him. One day, when the *Moniteur* published the list of new French princes, Campi was walking in the handsome picture gallery with one of the young

secretaries, and the conversation between them was as follows:

"No doubt, you have read to-day's *Moniteur?*"

"Yes."

"You saw that all the members of the Royal family have been made princes, and that the name of M. le Comte is missing from the list?"

"What does that matter? There are kingdoms."

"The sovereigns are at such pains to keep these that I don't see any vacant throne."

"Well, they must make a vacancy, that's all. All the Royal families in Europe are rather used up, so we must have some fresh ones."

Hereupon Campi was silent, and bade the young man hold his tongue, if he would keep in the Count's good graces.

Everybody at the Tuileries knew of the enmity existing between M. Lucien Bonaparte and the Empress Josephine. In order to curry favour with the last-named, *habitués* of La Malmaison, who afterwards blossomed out into courtiers at the Tuileries, used to make a point of telling her all the spicy stories they could discover regarding the Emperor's brother. Thus it was that once, by mere chance, I overheard a most sedate person, a senator of the Empire, gaily giving the Empress a detailed

account of one of Lucien's transient amours. It seems that the Count, in what year I cannot say, sought to enjoy the favours of Mademoiselle Méseray, a bright, pretty actress at the Théâtre Français. The conquest was not difficult, for, in the first place, she never made it difficult for any suitor, and, secondly, she knew that the Count was wealthy and believed that he was prodigal. Her lover's first attentions were calculated to confirm that impression. She asked for an establishment, when a sumptuously-furnished one was provided for her, and by each fresh visit of the Count's she was the richer in gowns and jewels. This lasted for some months, after which time M. Lucien grew sick of his bargain, and tried all he could to break off the affair without losing over-much. Among his presents to Mademoiselle Méseray there was a pair of costly diamond ear-rings. At one of their last meetings, yet before the Count showed any signs of cooling off, he saw the ear-rings lying on his mistress's dressing-table, and, picking them up, he said:

"Really, my dear, it is not right of you not to have more confidence in me. I am quite vexed with you for wearing such old-fashioned jewels as these."

"Old-fashioned? Why, you yourself gave them to me only six months ago!"